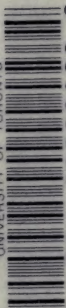


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OXFORD PAMPHLETS
1914

THOUGHTS ON THE
WAR

BY
GILBERT MURRAY

SECOND IMPRESSION

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THOUGHTS ON THE WAR¹

I. 'NOT much news : Great Britain has declared war on Austria.' The words fell quite simply, and with no intention of irony, from the lips of a friend of mine who picked up the newspaper on the day when I began to write down these thoughts, August 13. So amazingly had the world changed since the 4th. And it has changed even more by the time when I revise the proofs.

During the month of July and earlier, English politics were by no means dull. For my own part, my mind was profoundly occupied with a number of public questions and causes : the whole maintenance of law and democratic government seemed to be threatened, not to speak of social reform and the great self-redeeming movements of the working class. In the forefront came anxiety for Home Rule and the Parliament Act, and a growing indignation against various classes of 'wreckers' ; those reactionaries who seemed to be playing with rebellion, playing with militarism, recklessly inflaming the party spirit of minorities so as to make parliamentary government impossible ; those revolutionaries who were openly preaching the Class

¹ Reprinted, by kind permission of the editor, from *The Hibbert Journal* for October, 1914.

War and urging the working man to mistrust his own leaders and representatives and believe in nothing but some helpless gospel of hate.

And now that is all swept away. We think no more of our great causes, and we think no more of our mutual hatreds. Good and evil come together. Our higher ideals are forgotten, but we are a band of brothers standing side by side.

This is a great thing. The fine instinctive generosity with which the House of Commons, from Mr. Bonar Law to Mr. Redmond, rose to the crisis has spread an impulse over the country. There is a bond of fellowship between Englishmen who before had no meeting-ground. In time past I have sometimes envied the working men who can simply hail a stranger as 'mate': we dons and men of letters seem in ordinary times to have no 'mates' and no gift for getting them. But the ice between man and man is broken now.

I think, too, that the feeling between different classes must have softened. Rich business men, whom I can remember a short time ago tediously eloquent on the vices of trades unionists and of the working classes in general, are now instantly and without hesitation making large sacrifices and facing heavy risks to see that as few men as possible shall be thrown out of work, and that no women and children shall starve. And working men who have not money to give are giving more than money, and giving it without question or grudge. Thank God, we did not hate each other as much as we imagined; or else, while the hatred was real enough on the surface, at the back of our minds we loved each other more.

And the band of brothers is greater and wider than any of us dared to believe. Many English hearts must

have swelled with almost incredulous gratitude to hear of the messages and the gifts which come flooding in from all the dominions overseas: the gold, the grain, the sugar, the tobacco; its special produce coming from each State, and from all of them throngs of young men offering their strength and their life-blood. And India above all! One who has cared much about India and has friends among Indian Nationalists cannot read with dry eyes the messages that come from all races and creeds of India, from Hindu and Moslem societies, from princes and holy men and even political exiles. . . . We have not always been sympathetic in our government of India; we have not always been wise. But we have tried to be just; and we have given to India the best work of our best men. It would have been hard on us if India had shown no loyalty at all; but she has given us more than we deserved, more than we should have dared to claim. Neither Indian nor Englishman can forget it.

II. And there is something else. Travellers who have returned from France or Belgium—or Germany for that matter—tell us of the unhesitating heroism with which the ordinary men and women are giving themselves to the cause of their nation. A friend of mine heard the words of one Frenchwoman to another who was seeing her husband's train off to the front: '*Ne pleurez pas, il vous voit encore.*' When he was out of sight the tears might come! . . . Not thousands but millions of women are saying words like that to themselves, and millions of men going out to face death.

We in England have not yet been put to the same test as France and Belgium. We are in the flush of our first emotion; we have not yet had our nerves shaken by advancing armies, or our endurance ground

down by financial distress. But, as far as I can judge of the feelings of people whom I meet, they seem to me to be ready to answer any call that comes. We ask for 200,000 recruits and receive 300,000, for half a million and we receive three-quarters. We ask for more still, and the recruiting offices are overflowing. They cannot cope with the crowds of young men who cheerfully wait their turn at the office doors or on the pavement, while fierce old gentlemen continue to scold them in the newspapers. Certainly we are a quaint people.

And in the field ! A non-combatant stands humbled before the wonderful story of the retreat from Mons—the gallantry, the splendid skill, the mutual confidence of all ranks, the absolute faithfulness. One hardly dares praise such deeds ; one admires them in silence. And it is not the worshippers of war who have done this ; it is we, the good-natured, un-militarist, ultra-liberal people, the nation of humanitarians and shopkeepers.

Our army, indeed, is a professional army. What the French and the Belgians have done is an even more significant fact for civilization. It shows that the cultured, progressive, easy-living, peace-loving nations of Western Europe are not corrupted, at least as far as courage goes. The world has just seen them, bourgeois and working men, clerks, schoolmasters, musicians, grocers, ready in a moment when the call came ; able to march and fight for long days of scorching sun or icy rain ; willing, if need be, to die for their homes and countries, with no panic, no softening of the fibre . . . resolute to face death and to kill.

III. For there is that side of it too. We have now not only to strain every nerve to help our friend—we must strain every nerve also to injure our enemy.

This is horrible, but we must try to face the truth. For my own part, I find that I do desperately desire to hear of German dreadnoughts sunk in the North Sea. Mines are treacherous engines of death ; but I should be only too glad to help in laying a mine for them. When I see one day that 20,000 Germans have been killed in such-and-such an engagement, and next day that it was only 2,000, I am sorry.

That is where we are. We are fighting for that which we love, whatever we call it. It is the Right, but it is something even more than the Right. For our lives, for England, for the liberty of Western Europe, for the possibility of peace and friendship between nations ; for something which we should rather die than lose. And lose it we shall unless we can beat the Germans.

IV. Yet I have scarcely met a single person who seems to hate the Germans. We abominate their dishonest Government, their unscrupulous and arrogant diplomacy, the whole spirit of ' blood-and-iron ' ambition which seems to have spread from Prussia through a great part of the nation. But not the people in general. They too, by whatever criminal folly they were led into war, are fighting now for what they call ' the Right '. For their lives and homes and their national pride, for that strange ' Culture ', that idol of blood and clay and true gold, which they have built up with so many tears. They have been trebly deceived : deceived by their Government, deceived by their own idolatry, deceived by their sheer terror. They are ringed about by enemies ; their one ally is broken ; they hear the thunder of Cossack hoofs in the east coming ever closer ; and hordes of stupid moujiks behind them, innumerable, clumsy, barbarous, as they imagine in their shuddering dread, treading down the

beloved Fatherland as they come. . . . What do Germans care for punctilios and neutrality treaties in the face of such a horror as that ?

No : we cannot hate or blame the people in general. And certainly not the individual Germans whom we know. I have just by me a letter from young Fritz Hackmann, who was in Oxford last term and brought me an introduction from a Greek scholar in Berlin : a charming letter, full of gratitude for the very small friendlinesses I had been able to show him. I remember his sunny smile and his bow with a click of the heels. He is now fighting us. . . . And there is Paul Maass, too, a young Doctor of Philosophy, recently married. He sent me a short time back the photograph of his baby, Ulf, and we exchanged small jokes about Ulf's look of wisdom and his knowledge of Greek and his imperious habits. And now of course Maass is with his regiment, and we shall do our best to kill him, and after that to starve Ulf and Ulf's mother.

It is well for us to remember what war means when reduced to terms of private human life. Doubtless we have most of us met disagreeable Germans and been angry with them ; but I doubt if we ever wanted to cut their throats or blow them to pieces with lyddite. And many thousands of us have German friends, or have come across good straight Germans in business, or have carried on smiling and incompetent conversations with kindly German peasants on walking tours. We must remember such things as these, and not hate the Germans.

‘ A little later it may be different. In a few weeks English and Germans will have done each other cruel and irreparable wrongs. The blood of those we love will lie between us. We shall hear stories of horrible

suffering. Atrocities will be committed by a few bad or stupid people on both sides, and will be published and distorted and magnified. It will be hard to avoid hatred then ; so it is well to try to think things out while our minds are still clear, while we still hate the war and not the enemy.'

So I wrote three weeks ago. By the time I revise these lines the prophecy has been more than fulfilled. No one had anticipated then that the nightmare doctrines of Bismarck and Nietzsche and Bernhardi would be actually enforced by official orders. 'Cause to non-combatants the maximum of suffering : leave the women and children nothing but their eyes to weep with. . . .' We thought they said these things just to startle and shock us ; and it now appears that some of them meant what they said. . . . Still we must not hate the German people. Who knows how many secret acts of mercy, mercy at risk of life and against orders, were done at Louvain and Dinant ? Germans are not demons ; they are naturally fine and good people. And they will wake from their evil dream.

V. 'Never again !' I see that a well-known imperialist writes to the papers saying that these words should be embroidered on the kit-bags of the Royal Navy and painted on the knapsacks of all our soldiers. The aspiration is perhaps too bold, for 'Never' is a very large word ; but I believe it is the real aspiration of most civilized men, certainly of most Englishmen. We are fighting for our national life, for our ideals of freedom and honest government and fair dealing between nations : but most men, if asked what they would like to attain at the end of this war, if it is successful, would probably agree in their answer. We seek no territory, no aggrandizement, no revenge ;

we only want to be safe from the recurrence of this present horror. We want permanent peace for Europe and freedom for each nation.

What is the way to attain it? The writer whom I have quoted goes on: 'The war must not end until German warships are sunk, her fortresses razed to the ground, her army disbanded, her munitions destroyed, and the military and civil bureaucrats responsible for opening hell gates are shot or exiled.' As if that would bring us any nearer to a permanent peace! Crushing Germany would do no good. It would point straight towards a war of revenge. It is not Germany, it is a system, that needs crushing. Other nations before Germany have menaced the peace of Europe, and other nations will do so again after Germany, if the system remains the same.

VI. It is interesting to look back at the records of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, at the end of the last great war of allied Europe against a military despotism.

It was hoped then, a standard historian tells us, 'that so great an opportunity would not be lost, but that the statesmen would initiate such measures of international disarmament as would perpetuate the blessings of that peace which Europe was enjoying after twenty years of warfare'. Certain Powers wished to use the occasion for crushing and humiliating France; but fortunately they did not carry the Congress with them. Talleyrand persuaded the Congress to accept the view that the recent wars had not been wars of nations, but of principles. It had not been Austria, Russia, Prussia, England, against France; it had been the principle of legitimacy against all that was illegitimate, treaty-breaking, revolution, usurpation. Bona-

partism was to be destroyed ; France was not to be injured.

Castlereagh, the English representative, concentrated his efforts upon two great objects. The first, which he just failed to obtain, owing chiefly to difficulties about Turkey, was a really effective and fully armed Concert of Europe. He wished for a united guarantee from all the Powers that they would accept the settlement made by the Congress and would, in future, wage collective war against the first breaker of the peace. The second object, which he succeeded in gaining, was, curiously enough, an international declaration of the abolition of the slave trade.

The principle of legitimacy—of ordinary law and right and custom—as against lawless ambition : a concert of Powers pledged by collective treaty to maintain and enforce peace ; and the abolition of the slave trade ! It sounds like the scheme of some new Utopia, and it was really a main part of the political programme of the leaders of the Congress of Vienna—of Castlereagh, Metternich, Talleyrand, Alexander of Russia, and Frederick William of Prussia. . . . They are not names to rouse enthusiasm nowadays. All except Talleyrand were confessed enemies of freedom and enlightenment and almost everything that we regard as progressive ; and Talleyrand, though occasionally on the right side in such matters, was not a person to inspire confidence. Yet, after all, they were more or less reasonable human beings, and a bitter experience had educated them. Doubtless they blundered ; they went on all kinds of wrong principles ; they based their partition of Europe on what they called ‘ legitimacy ’, a perfectly artificial and false legitimacy, rather than nationality ; they loathed and dreaded popular movements ; they could

not quite keep their hands from a certain amount of picking and stealing. Yet, on the whole, we find these men at the end of the Great War fixing their minds not on glory and prestige and revenge, not on conventions and shams, but on ideals so great and true and humane and simple that most Englishmen in ordinary life are ashamed of mentioning them ; trying hard to make peace permanent on the basis of what was recognized as ' legitimate ' or fair ; and, amid many differences, agreeing at least in the universal abolition of the slave trade.

VII. Our next conference of Europe ought to do far better if only we can be sure that it will meet in the same high spirit. Instead of Castlereagh, we shall send from England some one like Mr. Asquith or Sir Edward Grey, with ten times more progressive and liberal feeling and ten times more insight and understanding. Even suppose we send a Conservative, Mr. Balfour or Lord Lansdowne, the advance upon Castlereagh will be almost as great. Instead of Talleyrand, France will send one of her many able republican leaders, from Clémenceau to Delcassé, certainly more honest and humane than Talleyrand. And Germany, who can say ? Except that it may be some one very different from these militarist schemers who have brought their country to ruin. In any case it is likely to be a wiser man than Frederick William, just as Russia is bound to send a wiser man than Alexander.

And behind these representatives there will be a deeper and far more intelligent feeling in the various peoples. In 1815 the nations were sick of war after long fighting. I doubt if there was any widespread conviction that war was in itself an abomination and an outrage on humanity. Philosophers felt it, some

inarticulate women and peasants and workmen felt it. But now such a feeling is almost universal. It commands a majority in any third-class railway carriage ; it is expressed almost as a matter of course in the average newspaper.

Between Waterloo and the present day there has passed one of the greatest and most swiftly progressive centuries of all human history, and the heart of Europe is really changed. I do not say we shall not have Jingo crowds or that our own hearts will not thrill with the various emotions of war, whether basé or noble. But there is a change. Ideas that once belonged to a few philosophers have sunk into common men's minds ; Tolstoy has taught us, the intimate records of modern wars have taught us, free intercourse with foreigners has educated us, even the illustrated papers have made us realize things. In 1914 it is not that we happen to be sick of war ; it is that we mean to extirpate war out of the normal possibilities of civilized life, as we have extirpated leprosy and typhus.

VIII. What kind of settlement can we hope to attain at the end of it all ?

The question is still far off, and may have assumed astonishingly different shapes by the time we reach it, but it is perhaps well to try, now while we are calm and unhurt, to think out what we would most desire.

First of all, no revenge, no deliberate humiliation of any enemy, no picking and stealing.

Next, a drastic resettlement of all those burning problems which carry in them the seeds of European war, especially the problems of territory. Many of the details will be very difficult ; some may prove insoluble. But in general we must try to arrange, even at considerable cost, that territory goes with nationality. The

annexation of Alsace-Lorraine has disturbed the west of Europe for forty years ; the wrong distributions of territory in the Balkan peninsula have kept the spark of war constantly alive in the East, and have not been fully corrected by the last Balkan settlement. Every nation which sees a slice of itself cut off and held under foreign rule is a danger to peace, and so is every nation that holds by force or fraud an alien province. At this moment, if Austria had not annexed some millions of Servians in Bosnia and Herzegovina she would have no mortal quarrel with Servia. Any drastic rearrangement of this sort will probably involve the break-up of Austria, a larger Italy, a larger Servia, a larger Germany—for the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, of Danish Schleswig, and the Polish provinces would be more than compensated by the accession of the Germanic parts of Austria—and a larger Russia. But it is not big nations that are a menace to peace ; it is nations with a grievance or nations who know that others have a grievance against them.

And shall we try again to achieve Castlereagh's and Alexander's ideal of a permanent Concert, pledged to make collective war upon the peace-breaker ? Surely we must. We must at all costs and in spite of all difficulties, because the alternative means such unspeakable failure. We must learn to agree, we civilized nations of Europe, or else we must perish. I believe that the chief counsel of wisdom here is to be sure to go far enough. We need a permanent Concert, perhaps a permanent Common Council, in which every awkward problem can be dealt with before it has time to grow dangerous, and in which outvoted minorities must accustom themselves to giving way. If we examine the failures of the European Concert in recent years

we shall find them generally due to two large causes. Either some Powers came into the council with unclean hands, determined to grab alien territory or fatally compromised because they had grabbed it in the past ; or else they met too late, when the air was full of mistrust, and not to yield had become a point of honour. Once make certain of good faith and a clean start, and surely there is in the great Powers of Europe sufficient unity of view and feeling about fundamental matters to make it possible for them to work honestly together—at any rate, when the alternative is stark ruin. . . . It is well to remember that in this matter, from Alexander I onward, Russia has steadily done her best to lead the way.

And the abolition of the slave trade ! It is wonderful to think that that was not only talked about but really achieved ; the greatest abomination in the world definitely killed, finished and buried, never to return, as a result of the meeting of the Powers at the end of the Great War. What can we hope for to equal that ? The limitation of armaments seems almost small in comparison.

We saw in the first week of the war what a nation and a government can do when the need or the opportunity comes. Armies and fleets mobilized, war risks assured, railways taken over, prices fixed . . . things that seemed almost impossible accomplished successfully in a few days. One sentence in Mr. Lloyd George's speech on the financial situation ran thus, if I remember the words : 'This part of the subject presents some peculiar difficulties, but I have no doubt they will be surmounted with the utmost ease.' That is the spirit in which our Government has risen to its crisis, a spirit not of shallow optimism but of that active and hard

thinking confidence which creates its own fulfilment. The power of man over circumstance is now—even now in the midst of this one terrific failure—immeasurably greater than it has ever yet been in history. Every year that passes has shown its increase. When the next settling day comes the real will of reasonable man should be able to assert itself and achieve its end with a completeness not conceivable in 1815.

IX. This is not the time to make any definite proposals. Civilization has still many slave trades to abolish. The trade in armaments is perhaps the most oppressive of all, but there are others also, slave trades social and intimate and international; no one can tell yet which ones and how many it may be possible to overthrow. But there is one thing that we must see. This war and the national aspiration behind the war must not be allowed to fall into the hands of the militarists. I do not say that we must not be ready for some form of universal service: that will depend on the circumstances in which the war leaves us. But we must not be militarized in mind and feeling; we must keep our politics British and not Prussian. That is the danger. It is the danger in every war. In time of war every interest, every passion, tends to be concentrated on the mere fighting, the gaining of advantages, the persistent use of cunning and force. An atmosphere tends to grow up in which the militarist and the schemer are at home and the liberal and democrat homeless.

There are many thousands of social reformers and radicals in this country who instinctively loathe war, and have only been convinced with the utmost reluctance, if at all, of the necessity of our fighting. The danger is that these people, containing among them some of our best guides and most helpful political

thinkers, may from disgust and discouragement fall into the background and leave public opinion to the mercy of our own von Tirpitzes and Bernhardis. That would be the last culminating disaster. It would mean that the war had ceased to be a war for free Europe against militarism, and had become merely one of the ordinary sordid and bloody struggles of nation against nation, one link in the insane chain of wrongs that lead ever to worse wrongs.

One may well be thankful that the strongest of the neutral Powers is guided by a leader so wise and upright and temperate as President Wilson. One may be thankful, too, that both here and in France we have in power not only a very able Ministry but a strongly liberal and peace-loving Ministry. In the first place, it unites the country far more effectively than any ministry which could be suspected of Jingoism. In the second place, it gives us a chance of a permanent settlement, based on wisdom and not on ambition. It is fortunate also that in Russia the more liberal elements in the Government seem to be predominant. Some English liberals seem to be sorry and half ashamed that we have Russia as an ally; for my own part I am glad and proud. Not only because of her splendid military achievements, but because, so far as I can read the signs of such things, there is in Russia, more than in other nations, a vast untapped reservoir of spiritual power, of idealism, of striving for a nobler life. And that is what Europe will most need at the end of this bitter material struggle. I am proud to think that the liberal and progressive elements in Russia are looking towards England and feeling strengthened by English friendship. 'This is for us,' said a great Russian liberal to me some days ago,

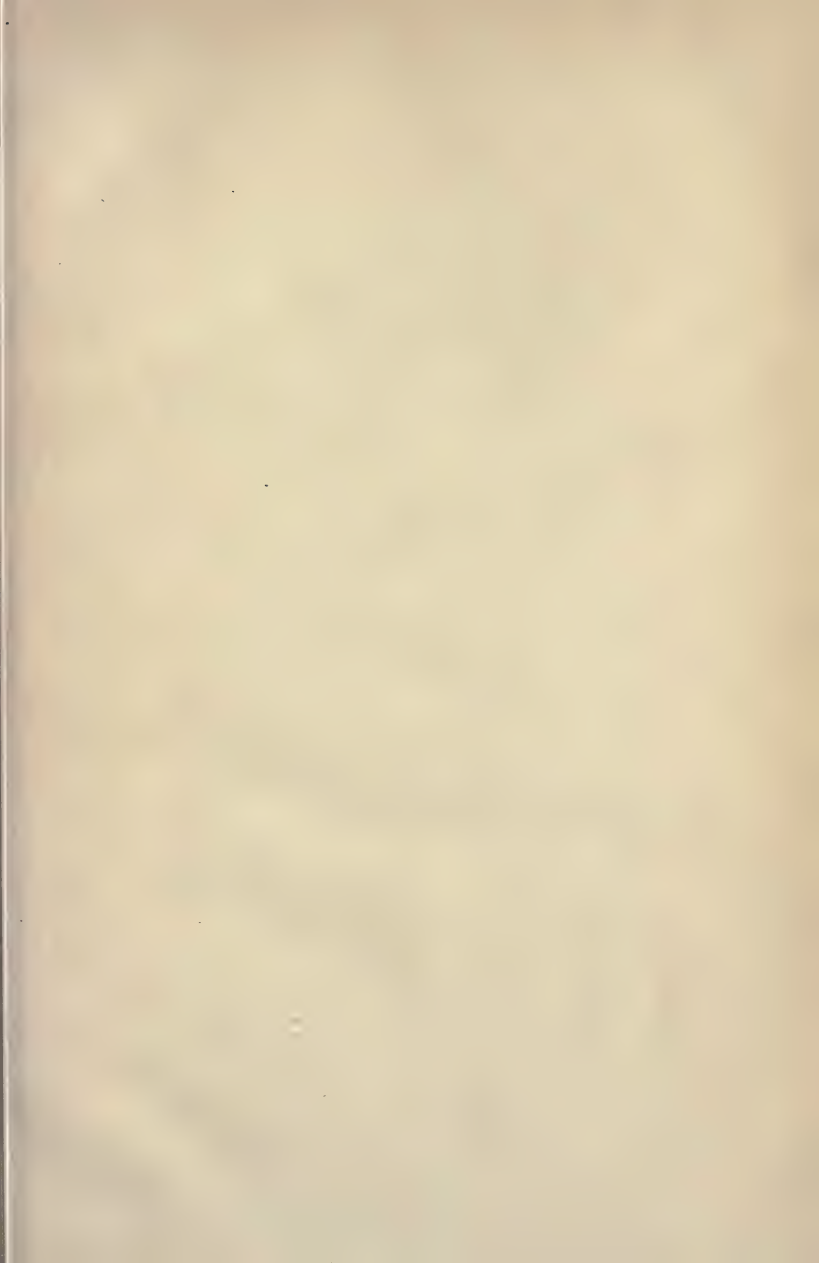
'this is for us a *Befreiungskrieg* (war of liberation). After this, reaction is impossible.' We are fighting not only to defend Russian governors and Russian peasants against German invasion, but also, and perhaps even more profoundly, to enable the Russia of Turgenieff and Tolstoy, the Russia of many artists and many martyrs, to work out its destiny and its freedom. If the true Russia has a powerful voice in the final settlement it will be a great thing for humanity.

Of course, all these hopes may be shattered and made ridiculous before the settlement comes. They would be shattered, probably, by a German victory; not because Germans are wicked, but because a German victory at the present time would mean a victory for blood-and-iron. They would be shattered, certainly, if in each separate country the liberal forces abandoned the situation to the reactionaries, and stood aside while the nation fell into that embitterment and brutalization of feeling which is the natural consequence of a long war.

To prevent the first of these perils is the work of our armies and navies; to prevent the second should be the work of all thoughtful non-combatants. It may be a difficult task, but at least it is not hideous; and some of the work that we must do is. So hideous, indeed, that at times it seems strange that we can carry it out at all—this war of civilized men against civilized men, against our intellectual teachers, our brothers in art and science and healing medicine, and so large a part of all that makes life beautiful. When we remember all this it makes us feel lost and heavy-hearted, like men struggling and unable to move in an evil dream. . . . So, it seems, for the time being we must forget it. We modern men are accustomed by the needs of life to

this division of feelings. In every war, in every competition almost, there is something of the same difficulty, and we have learned to keep the two sides of our mind apart. We must fight our hardest, indomitably, gallantly, even joyously, forgetting all else while we have to fight. When the fight is over we must remember.







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THE LEADERSHIP
OF THE WORLD

BY

F. S. MARVIN

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THE LEADERSHIP OF THE WORLD

THE war goes on, with all its heroism and devastation, with no realization of German hopes, with a growing certainty that the Allied Powers will be able sooner or later to impose on a defeated foe the conditions which his criminal breach of international duty and the security of Europe appear to them to demand. It may not be amiss at such a point to examine one of the great fundamental questions in dispute, a question which has for many years tormented the mind of German publicists, and led them to many dangerous and perverted conclusions. What is meant by the hegemony of the civilized world? Where are we to look for it? By what organs and to what end can it and ought it to express its will?

It is not surprising that so great a question should have issued in the greatest armed conflict which history records. Many of us in all the leading countries of the world hoped that the latent danger might have been averted and a peaceful solution reached by reason and conciliation. Theoretically it was possible. In practice the problem has proved to surpass our powers.

It is significant that the greatest war since the Roman Empire should lead us back to the Roman Empire for its full explanation. The question of the leadership of the civilized world dates from then. For more than six hundred years, from the time when Rome defeated her greatest rival in the second Punic War to the final

dissolution of the Empire before the barbarians, there was one undisputed leader. Rome combined in her own hands during that period the intellectual primacy which had been won by the Greeks, with moral and military forces drawn from herself. It was a moment of inestimable benefit to mankind, a consolidation which seems to us in the retrospect indispensable to the progress of the world; but it has floated ever since as a mirage to misguide and lead to destruction the headstrong ambitions of nations who have found themselves in possession of a temporary superiority over their neighbours. The mediaeval Empire fought and broke in a vain endeavour to regain it, for the Holy Roman Emperor was always struggling in vain to secure the dominion of Italy. Spain was ruined in the same pursuit for Empire. France has had more than one fatal paroxysm. We ourselves have not been exempt. Germany, as we shall see, has had many motives driving her to compete for the same now unattainable goal.

Now no conclusion from history can be more certain than this: what Rome did, she did once for all, and it cannot and should not ever be repeated.

The change of conditions which has made such an hegemony as that of ancient Rome for ever impossible again in the world, is so obvious that only a few of the maddest claimants, an occasional Napoleon, have openly aspired to it. The area of civilization which Rome had incorporated round the Mediterranean was extended by the Catholic Church, and the discovery of the New World made it far larger. The growth of trade, of science, of communication, produced a complex so vast and varied that no one centre could possibly control or keep in contact with the whole. In our own days it is less clear than it was that Europe as

a whole can retain the leadership of the world. But meanwhile the growth, the grouping, the inter-relations of the heirs of the Roman Empire have provided incessant problems for the two thousand years since. It is an acute crisis in this movement which is now upon us.

For though the hegemony of one State in the world has passed for ever, there is still somewhere a leading force in the world's progress, a nucleus of stronger and more civilized nations who contain among them the fruits of man's evolution in far greater abundance and better diffused than among the remaining less-advanced peoples of the globe. There is a vanguard, which may lead if it will.

A concert of leading nations, bound one to another by links of high achievement in science and the arts of life, in political organization and outlook on the world, pressing on in friendly rivalry to greater strength and prosperity for themselves, while guiding and helping the more backward races,—this has been the generous ideal of multitudes of thinkers in all ages ever since the break-up of the Roman Empire destroyed the temporary hope of a world-wide civilization, diffused from one centre. It has taken various colours in successive epochs. The Catholic thinkers of the Middle Ages saw it in the light of a religious unity binding the most distant and diverse nations in a common hope under a common head. The better minds of the Renaissance, such as those who inspired the testament of Henri IV, saw it as a political alliance of independent States under enlightened rulers. The eighteenth century conceived the notion of free national democracies handing on the light to peoples sitting in the darkness and the twilight. But again and again the vision has been broken and hopes dashed to the ground by disasters

which sometimes seemed comparable to the fall of the Roman Empire itself. The wars of religion which followed Henri IV were one such overthrow. The Napoleonic wars were another. The present struggle bears some ominous marks of likeness. We need to see through it, to discern the recuperative forces, to reconstruct at least ideally and for ourselves this comity of nations which history and reason compel us to accept as the guiding human force in the affairs of the world.

How then can we explain, before we come to healing, this last great breach among the leading nations of the West? The diplomatic case has been so clearly and so unanswerably stated in papers and in speeches that it would be idle, even if relevant, to review it here. But it is necessary also to appreciate the popular German view which is quite unaffected by the course of diplomacy, carefully concealed from the popular mind. They are faced, they think, by a danger of expansive barbarism on their Eastern frontier. This foe has, by the fatal accident of their central position, become allied with the Western foe they had to fight for their national unity in 1870, and we have taken the opportunity of dealing a felon's blow at our most serious naval and commercial rival.

The picture is a hideous nightmare of fear, hostility, and distrust. But so far as it is really present to the minds of multitudes of otherwise rational and moral people—and of this there is no doubt—it behoves us to understand its genesis, and, if possible, its cure. It is true that Germany is faced on the East by masses of men less civilized, according to ordinary Western standards, than herself. It is true that she has on the West a neighbour alienated from her by centuries of conflict pressed to a ruthless issue forty years ago. It

is true that owing to a long series of historical causes she achieved such national unity as she possesses, much later and by more violent and artificial methods than her great Western neighbours. All this is to say that in spite of the strength of her central position in the continent, she has had exceptional difficulties to face in reaching the degree of cohesion and of international weight which her numbers and her mental force deserve. It explains, without wholly justifying, the fact, which Comte pointed out more than fifty years ago, that she remains the most military of the Western Powers. But precisely in these facts lies also the menace to European peace and security of which we have now the disastrous evidence before us. The strong and exceptional methods and organization which Germany needed as medicine for her own ailments, she has used as poison for her neighbours and the world.

This is the explanation of the strange paradox, noticed by more than one writer on the crisis, that German action was prompted both by fear and by overweening strength.

One gets the impression, in reading the modern German political writers, people like Treitschke and his school, of men peering at the world through the loopholes of a mighty fortress, constructed with the utmost skill, but giving the least possible inlet to light or life from without. They are afraid, and yet they have built themselves a stronghold in which they might, if they would, rest in security from any probable assault, and from which they may, if they will, commit the most damaging excursions upon their neighbours with the minimum of loss to themselves. We know the story of scores of such fortresses in earlier and wilder days. Built for defence, they became the

home and instrument of lawless tyranny and widespread devastation. Treitschke himself is the type of the bluff, genial, not unattractive chieftain, a builder and a man of insight, not without moments of tolerance and even sympathy for his neighbours. The Germans themselves have compared him with some justice to our own Carlyle. But his followers—the Pan-German League and the like, whom he repudiated himself—received from his hands tools that they have used to deadly purpose, without the glimpses of humanity and progress which one may trace in his own work. In his own sphere much to the same purpose might be said of Bismarck. Take some of the pithy sayings in Treitschke's *Lectures on Politics* :

The map of our part of the globe has been much more natural since [i.e. since 1870]; the centre is strengthened ; *the inspired idea that the centre of gravity of Europe must lie in the middle, has become reality.* Through the founding of the German Empire a tranquillity has entered spontaneously into the system of States, inasmuch as ambition in Prussia can now be silent ; Prussia has essentially attained the power she required.

This has a ring of sincerity. The man who said it did not desire an aggressive, world-conquering empire. But the 'inspired idea' is just the heady stuff which sets on other people to do the mischief. Why, because Germany happens to be the central land-mass of Western Europe, should she become the 'centre of gravity of Europe' in a political or moral sense, still less of the world, which has tended more and more towards the West ?

The North Sea has the worst coast imaginable in Germany because of the sandflats. . . . But even here can be seen how man is able to overcome natural

obstacles. This Germany, with its forbidding coastline, was yet once on a time the leading sea-power and, please God, it shall become so again.

This is more dangerous, though one cannot help admiring the confident challenge to Nature. So far as it is aimed at England, it ignores the fact that an island has a natural claim to a stronger navy and that we have never aspired to a commanding army.

But there is a further and more serious point in Treitschke's teaching which needs closer attention. We rejoice that any neighbouring nation is consolidated and gains security and strength : we may even admire the energy and determination that make of the most unpromising sea-board in the world the home of a rising sea-power. But what of the place which this aspiring and strengthened nation is to play in the comity of leading States in whose hands the future civilization of the world mainly rests ? It is on this side that the recent political philosophy of Germany leads to such an abyss. We find, it is true, one or two perfunctory statements in Treitschke that 'every nation exhibits a different picture and a different conception of the divinity' and that 'all civilization aims at making human life more harmonious' ; but no guidance whatever is offered as to the way in which the leading Powers generally and Germany in particular are to co-operate in what must be the greatest and crowning achievement of mankind. On the contrary, words, ideas, arguments crowd on one another, which directly oppose the combination of human efforts to further the common interests of the race.

We all know the theory of the divine State and the divine monarch. It has played a part in our own political history, but has an even greater importance with the Germans. Treitschke is a late inheritor of the

doctrine, and has given one aspect of it a particularly dangerous turn. It assumes that the basis of the State is power—the collective power of all the members used primarily for the common good of all. What are these common interests? ‘It is very obvious,’ says Treitschke, ‘that the first task of the State is a twofold one; it is, as we have seen, power in an external direction and the regulation of justice internally; its fundamental functions must therefore be the organization of the army and the administration of the law. . . . The second essential function of the State is to make war.’ Thus not only is the first part of its primary function to organize the army, but the whole of the second essential function is to set this organization in motion. Whatever function in civilization the State may also possess, this stands in the forefront and proclaims the militarist régime. It is interesting to compare the conclusions on the same point of the greatest of early theorists on the nature of the State. Aristotle, living himself in a time far less suited to rational and peaceful contemplation than our own, declared that the primary function of any community was ‘Life’, and the next to that ‘A good life’.¹

The whole point in these questions, as in those of private morals, is where we lay the stress. We may pay perfunctory lip-homage to the duty of kindness at home and educating our children, but if we spend our main energies on personal display and arranging pleasure-trips for ourselves, we are worse than a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. But in some of these Treitschkean writings we hardly get lip-homage to the duty of the State towards other members of the human family. The old Kantian ideal of a condition of universal and per-

¹ Aristotle's *Politics*.

petual peace—not of course to be immediately realized but to be worked for steadily through years of compromise and agreement, broken by occasional and inevitable conflict—this is openly flouted as nonsense. ‘Self-sacrifice for a foreign nation is not only not moral but it contradicts the idea of self-preservation, which is the highest thing for the state.’ From such a State, it is clear, whatever may be the private virtues of its citizens, no help could be expected for the victims of the Turk, no stay of execution for the Chinese, no pity for the Belgians.

The bias which such a theory of the State must give in dealing with colonies and weaker races is obvious. Every great nation must have its colonies as a fair share in the ‘domination of the transatlantic world by the aristocracy of the whites’. If it has not a share proportioned to its strength and its ambition, it will fight for it, and it will ‘anticipate the obvious dangers of over-population by colonization, on a large scale’. The ‘scramble for Africa’ is thus elevated into a principle of State, without any real concern for the millions of men of other races and colours who form at least the rear-guard of the human army on the march. Have we not advanced in four hundred years beyond the position of the ‘conquistadores’ of the New World?

One knows of course that there are thousands of good Germans who would not subscribe to the doctrine and are working for the betterment of mankind in every quarter of the globe. But unfortunately the doctrine, which again is not confined to them, finds expression in its most naked and brutal form in their public writers and their public actions. It is the worst devil which has to be cast out, before the leadership of the world, in the common interest of all its inhabitants, can be

established with any hope of large success, and without the imminent risk of the recurring cataclysms which have hitherto interrupted all great efforts at concert.

The group of great nations which emerged from the dissolution of the Roman Empire were England, France, Spain, Italy, and Germany. It was in this order that they gained their national unity, which is one very important factor, among others, in the problem before us. From this point of view it seems fair to give the preference to England and date her final consolidation from Chaucer and the end of the fourteenth century, whereas France had to wait for the end of the Hundred Years' War and Louis XI's absorption of the feudal States. In Spain the Moorish occupation postponed the process still further, and the intellectual and material ravages due to religious persecution exhausted the nation and have till the present prevented her taking a place in the concert of people correspondent with her size, position, and population. Both Italy and Germany come much later in the race for political unity and strength, and both were affected by that conflict between the Pope and the mediaeval Emperor which was the leading political issue in the Middle Ages. Both nations, however, counted for far more in Europe at the revival of learning and intellectual life in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, than their political and military power would have warranted, and Italy, when her union was achieved in the 'sixties of the last century, became a compact, well-defined country, needing only small rectifications of her northern boundary, to be coincident with her nationality and easily defended from external attack.

Germany, however, unfortunately for herself and for the rest of the world, was beset by political difficulties

both within and without. With a large, vigorous, and intensely patriotic population she was, and to a large extent still is, divided into a number of politically independent States. The incorporation which France achieved four hundred years before, through the personal activity and political genius of Louis XI, Germany only secured, and to a smaller degree, by a great war carried out at the expense of France. The stamp of blood and iron was thus set, for long if not for ever, on her national life. Nor is this all. The problems on her western and eastern frontiers were bound to call forth either self-restraint or ambition on the part of any people. On the west, kindred people holding the mouths of great rivers draining her own land : on the east, people of lower civilization, often turbulent, always expansive. In these circumstances the success of a strong and ambitious Power, such as Prussia, able and willing to lead and unify the nation, was a foregone conclusion. Prussia herself was served by a series of able and devoted men. From the time of Frederic the Great to her fight against Napoleon, and again in the crowning victory of 1871, she won the allegiance of all patriotic Germans by her supreme power of organization, her bold strokes of foreign policy, her persistence, and her national enthusiasm. But the triumph of the centralizing State, with that tragic discord which has so often marked the evolution of German life, involved the decay of the generous instincts of the older, less organized German, and a set-back to ideals, except of force and material success.

Of the five great nations, three preserve their intellectual eminence. France, Germany, and England, judged by their contributions to science, literature, and the arts of life, stand in a group apart. But in

the volume of its learning, its detailed scientific work, its music, Germany is easily first. The industry and docility of her population are beyond compare. Whether socialist or bourgeois, they have been led to the barracks, the class-room, and the polling-booth, with the same marvellous precision and discipline as we have witnessed in a hundred rushes upon our trenches on the Aisne and the Yser. How to combine this order and teachableness with some understanding and regard for the rights and feelings of others, to harness these incomparable forces not in servitude, but in willing co-operation with the progressive nations throughout the world,—this is the true problem, secondary in time to the immediate necessity of inflicting a decisive blow on an aggressive and ruthless enemy, but supreme in importance for the well-being of Europe and mankind. For humanity must be justified of all her children.

The group of five nations which took up the work of Rome has varied much. Spain, since the seventeenth century, has no longer a seat at their council-board. The United States, Russia, and Japan have within the same period established their place in the first rank. The present grouping is the result of long historical evolution, working within the limits of the land masses of our planet. You have a central group—France, England, and Germany—with a nucleus of Belgium and Holland offering a neutral meeting-place for international associations in their capitals. A fringe of small and highly cultivated States to the north, with two large and two small States to the south, complete the great *massif* of European culture. East and west are the colossal powers of Russia and the United States, standing the one for Eastern Europe and Northern Asia, the other for the New World. On the east come

the Japanese, now clearly marked out as the guardians and tutors of the undeveloped giant of the Yellow race. Further south the offshoots of the British race in Africa and Australasia and of the Latin States in South America complete the picture.

The German people have thus a strong position in the central group, and to them would naturally fall the primacy and guardianship of the northern States of Europe. No one would grudge it, did not the guardian show so strong an inclination to devour his wards. But this question of the right relation of the strong Power to the weak is at the root of the present conflict. It is a hopeful feature both for the issue of the war and the future happiness of mankind that the cause of the Allies is bound up, both on the east and west, with the fortunes of a small State struggling for its independence, while their opponents, Germany and Turkey, are detested by all their subject races. In this matter the United States, in Cuba, in Porto Rico, as in China, have set a high example to the world. France has done well in Tunis, and latterly in Algeria and the East. England, whatever her errors in the past, has now a practically unanimous Empire to support her cause. Russia, we hope and believe, will crown her career of heroic efforts for freedom abroad with larger grants of freedom at home. But Germany, full of national self-consciousness and with the thoroughness which marks all her actions, does nothing for her subject peoples, except impress upon them with relentless vigour the stamp of German ideas, German institutions, and German language.¹

¹ A characteristic story has just reached us of the treatment of the prisoners of war in the fortress of Königstein. There was an Englishman there with a number of Frenchmen. He reported

Happily the war finds us serving with zeal the general commonwealth. It is in the mid stream of our best tradition to clinch the opposition of Europe to any Power which threatens the security and independence of others. And this time, happily also, we are side by side with the Power which has, more often than any, illuminated Europe with the light of a new principle or a burning watchword. France led the Crusades for religion in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and for freedom in the eighteenth. But since the latter, heroic and externally disastrous like the first, so great a change has come over the texture of human society, especially in the West, that we must expect the results of the present war to differ, as widely as the tactics and dispositions of the armies on the field differ from anything on record. The growth of two human factors in the century since Waterloo is really its most notable feature; these two are science and sympathy. Both are indispensable, and her triumphs in the former will not save Germany from the consequences of her deficiency in the latter.

It may seem a strange and unseasonable hour to be looking for traces of a growing sympathy and amity among the nations of the globe. Yet it is obviously true that the world has become one in the last century in ways and to a degree which had not been dreamt of before steam and electricity were turned to the purposes of man. Larger aggregates of men are now collected in cities and in political communities than at any previous period in history. They are in hourly receipt of news from the ends of the earth, except when Govern-

that they had no complaint to make of their food or general condition. The governor was fortunately a gentleman. But they were all compelled to receive lessons in German every evening!

ments for their own ends obstruct or suppress the passage of the truth. Lines of commerce, exploring travellers, have knit up the most remote regions with the centres of intensest life. By intercourse, small and eccentric languages and cults are being blotted out, and common ways of thought and life more and more diffused. So many different societies for international purposes have been formed, that two special centres for transacting their business have been opened, one at Brussels and the other at The Hague. At the root of all lies the extension of scientific methods and results, greater in the nineteenth century than in all earlier centuries put together. For science is the great unifier of the world, as language is the unifier of nations.

Now, throughout this process, especially on its mechanical side, the Germanic people have played a distinguished part. The Humboldts at the beginning of the century were the pioneers in international co-operation for scientific expeditions and recording observations. In the hundred years which have elapsed since their time the mass of German work has steadily grown. There are at the present moment as many German members of foreign learned societies as of any other two nations put together. Their mass of printed books far exceeds any other country's. They have organized their national life and social service with a thoroughness with which no one can compete. This contribution to the world's work and progress would remain, even if they were blotted out by an overwhelming defeat from the front rank of nations.

But such an issue to the war is by no means to be expected, even if we desired it. The break up of a mighty nation which has achieved its unity by years

of costly and deliberate effort, is not promoted by external attack. With them, as with us, the loud blast which tears the skies will serve but to root more firm the native oak. Any changes in the direction either of constitutional government or of decentralization must and should come from within, and they do not directly concern our present argument. What we are trying to see in focus is Germany, or the Germanic Powers, as an essential part of the leading human forces of the globe, Germany and Humanity, a hard collocation for us at the moment, but one that must be faced if the war is to leave us with a balance of hope in the world.

The results of this growth of science and sympathy, both on the present situation and the future, are of the highest moment. We are absorbed just now in tracing the effects of the scientific evolution on the fighting both by sea and land. But far more profound and decisive ultimately will be the influence of science on the restitution of prosperity and the future organization of the world. So great is the increase of productive power due to science, that the huge expense and the ravages of war will be repaired—so far as they can be materially—within less time than any previous great war has required. This is, on the one hand, an assurance to those who fear that a decisive victory may leave Europe lopped of one of her vital members. On the other hand, the community of the world created by science must persist and deepen. It is idle for German men of science to turn their back on the world and divest themselves of foreign degrees. They must for many purposes still use the common scientific nomenclature and still enjoy the fruits of scientific discoveries made by the university of mankind. Thus

it is to science that we may look for the great recuperative forces which will be needed to fill up the chasms and rebuild the ruins of the war. It can do much,—except restore the young lives and the old beauty that have gone.

But for the future unity and guidance of the world it has a deeper meaning. The world has been made one by science in a new, intimate, and permanent sense. But it is not only or mainly the material links which count—the railways and steamers, the telegraphy, the international finance. These may be, and often are, destroyed or disturbed by external causes, by war and rumours of war. But the achievements of science, especially as applied to ameliorating human life, are a common possession of which no national jealousy can prevent the diffusion or hinder the use. Can any one suppose or conceive that a Pasteur or a Koch, a Lister or a Virchow, will be less universally acclaimed after than before the war? And deeper still are those currents of thought which are bringing men of all nations closer together on questions affecting the validity of their knowledge and the purpose of their life. We are coming gradually to recognize that it is these things, far more than armed strength or political hegemony, which give a title to the leadership of the world, and the claim is open to members of all States, irrespective of size.

Our argument has brought us to the point from which we may appreciate the need and the appropriateness of the Latin-French word 'Humanity', in its two-fold sense of feeling, and of the concrete whole of human beings considered as one. It would be exceedingly interesting and instructive to trace its history; but one point is clear. The equivalent German word

'Menschheit' or 'Menschlichkeit' has never had the vogue which 'Humanité', 'Umanità', 'Humanidad' have enjoyed among the Latin races, and, through one of our happy borrowings, among ourselves. The leading French Socialist journal is *L'Humanité*, the German is *Vorwärts*.

It is a commonplace among a certain school of somewhat cynical criticism to treat 'humanitarianism' in politics as a passing phase of pure sentiment, which was swept away by the inroads of what the Germans call 'Realpolitik'. Nothing could be further from the truth. With certain ebbs and flows due to transient causes there has been, ever since Europe recovered from the shock of Napoleon, a steady growth of the belief among the masses of the population in the West and all intelligent statesmen, that the activities of the State should be concentrated upon securing the best conditions of life for all, and that this is only possible by peaceful and active co-operation with other nations. The 'sentiment' of the early nineteenth century has only given place to a more deliberate and reasoned prosecution of the same end. Nor has the sentiment itself suffered any abatement. In England, France, and Germany there have never been so many multitudes as at the present day who would respond to any appeal to human brotherhood, and one may safely say the same of Italy, the United States, and Russia. The passion is there, and within each State steps have been taken in various degrees to secure the desired welfare for its own citizens. The failure has been in co-operation between States to avoid conflicts and reduce armaments and to unite the forces of the leading Powers in helping and guiding the weaker. China, Persia, the Congo, the Balkans, the Indians of South

America, the Arabs of Tripoli have cried aloud in recent years for more collective wisdom and humanity from those who are able to coerce them in the name of science and Western policy. Their needs will not be satisfied until each Great Power recognizes larger interests beyond its own, and, without endangering itself, prepares to treat others as a good man tries to treat his neighbours.

The special causes at stake in this war are therefore bound up with the widest issues which can appeal to mankind. They embrace the maintenance of treaties, but go beyond them. We are dealing with the terms on which the nations of the world, especially those in a commanding position, are to associate with one another, and the objects of their common action. On the threshold of this question it will occur to the plain man that any useful co-operation must be to the last degree difficult and often impossible in the atmosphere of deceit, lying, jealousy, and suspicion, which is now revealed and hangs like a stifling miasma over the field of battle. It is a sensible relief that the main source of this is not with us, and we are marching in full force and determination against its most responsible authors. But after all a sword is a poor instrument for dispersing a fog ; and until the general tone between nations is one of security and goodwill, little will be effected by specific proposals for arbitration and disarmament, open diplomacy, or insurance against war. Definite reforms can, of course, be secured by force of arms, e.g. in resettling the uneasy provinces to the west and east of Germany. But, given our success in this—a restored Belgium, a liberated Alsace and Lorraine, an autonomous Poland, and a Slav Switzerland in the Balkans—the work of the future, the active co-operation of the leading Powers for the prosperity and advancement of the whole world would still remain to be begun.

The hindrances in the past have been as manifold as the weaknesses of human nature. The actual occurrence of occasional wars is not the most serious of them. Much worse than this is the generally ineffective and negative character of the concerted action of the Great Powers when they come together. They are usually quite satisfied and happy if they prevent anything worse occurring than they have actually before them. The Balkan problem which is the immediate cause of the present war is a conspicuous instance. It was difficult, but clearly not beyond the wit of man, to devise a settlement better than anything realized in those regions. The Powers met and discussed it in the fullest detail. Their positive constructions have in each case already broken down, and their preventive measures, which it was hoped had averted a general war, only succeeded in postponing that event for less than two years. It will be said that in this case the local conflict only veiled an irreconcilable opposition between some of the Great Powers themselves, which nothing but the sword could settle. This may be so; at any rate after the event we are unable to deny it. The most certain point is that in public as in private differences, the essential preliminary of any agreement is a determination to settle and a frank exposition of rival points of view. These were wanting, and though they are found not unattainable in private disputes, they still appear Utopian in international matters.

There is, however, a large range of questions on which exchange of views and effective decisions are taken even between countries which are sharply divided on *la haute politique*. It would enhance the goodwill of nations and increase the chances of harmonious joint action in other matters, if the settlements in these

more obscure though vital questions received more public recognition.

Two recent instances may serve to illustrate many others. For several years an international committee has been meeting under the authority of various Governments to decide on joint action affecting the conditions of labour. On this committee, France, Germany, and England were always able, when they agreed, to impose their will on the rest. Even in the throes of the Moroccan crisis the three Powers were working to limit still further the hours of women and children, and to give a universal half-holiday to factory workers. Another instance, a few years earlier, was the adoption, at the instance of France, of a universal nomenclature of diseases by all the Powers now engaged in destroying life.

The special significance of such agreements lies in the fact that they are a new development, due to the industrial revolution and the spread of science. There is nothing comparable before the nineteenth century, and the movement grows apace.

It is important to note that many, perhaps the most binding, of international links are not connected with State action at all. This is the case with religious and with most scientific work, which is constantly bringing men's minds closer together without any apparent approximation to a confederation of Europe. Some of the organs of the new spirit will be political—arbitration courts, international labour committees, possibly some day an international police. Others, the most far-reaching, will and should remain non-political.

For this lies at the heart of our criticism of the modern German theory and tyranny of the State, that the greatest and deepest things which bind mankind together and create what we call 'humanity', are independent

of State control, and would grow even without State support. Religion, science, sympathy, these are the strongest bonds, and the changing groups of nations which hold for a time the leadership of the world, will attain the common end of human good only so far as their policy is inspired by these moving forces greater than themselves. We believe that in this crisis our cause and that of France is in the true line of human progress, and that a defeated and regenerated Germany will bring priceless contributions to unite with ours. We believe, too, that the war has brought for ever into the inner circle of leading Powers the half-Asiatic Russian, whose simple life has long concealed a power of affection and devotion, an enthusiasm and strength of character, which more highly organized and materialist civilizations often blunt.

Some changes in the grouping of Powers and the sympathy of nations, the greatest of wars was bound to bring. It will not go deeper, or destroy the immemorial links of European culture, based on a common inheritance of science, language, and history. When the storm has passed, we shall see again, enthroned in its ancient seat, the spirit which inspired the greatest of modern poets, the Spirit of Union, without which man's activity would revolve in a barren circle to sheer destruction.

Strange contradiction, that we turn to the leading poet of Germany both for the strongest condemnation of Germany's recent and present spirit and for the strongest hopes of healing hereafter.

Alle menschlichen Gebrechen
Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit.¹

¹ Goethe to Krüger (1827): 'All the sins of human nature pure humanity redeems.'

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OF BRITISH POLICY

BY
GERARD COLLIER

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THE LEADING IDEAS OF BRITISH POLICY

It is necessary for any one who would understand the leading ideas of British policy to run over in his mind the long roll of our mighty dead—from Alfred the Great downwards. Only then will he understand how deep-rooted and persistent is the imperial instinct of the English nation. It is older than the English Parliament, and about as old as the English language or any other of the oldest things that are essentially English. It is exemplified in our earliest annals by the Northumbrian and Mercian forerunners of Alfred, and by his descendants from Edward the Elder to Edgar the Peaceful. It was gratified by the wars and conquests of our foreign rulers from William the Conqueror to Richard Cœur de Lion. In Edward III we see the most conspicuous of these early imperialists. Edward III, besides continuing an old and a mistaken policy of continental aggrandizement, turned his thoughts to sea-power. He claimed, and for a time he secured, the 'dominion of the narrow seas', which since his time has been regarded as vital to the prosperity and safety of these islands; though more than a century elapsed from his death before England was sufficiently united and self-confident to follow out his naval policy with resolution and success. It was under the Tudors that she began consistently to behave as though 'her future lay upon the water'.

Throughout the last four hundred years, which is the

Modern Age, the position of England has been mysterious and complicated, and as England has become Britain this is true also of Britain and the British Empire—there is no doubt that this mystery is the secret of our strength, but, as the probing of a mystery only leads to the discovery of deeper truths, we do not hesitate to attempt the task.

With the break-up of mediaeval Christendom, England, like some other European countries, became intensely national in feeling, in ambitions, in religion. At the same time, and indeed as a part of the same process, the English imagination turned to the New World, which provided a boundless field for the enrichment and expansion of national life and for the propagation of national ideals. An empire of the New World was now the dream of Englishmen. Let us consider first what this dream of empire meant ; secondly, how Englishmen prepared themselves to win it ; thirdly, how, in the race for empire, England was favoured above other nations.

(1) The empire of the New World was, to begin with, a religious ideal ; the quest for it was a crusade. The English supposed themselves to be the chosen people, enjoying a monopoly of divine truth. A strange belief, it may seem, for rough sea-faring folk such as were the Elizabethan pioneers of the imperial idea. But we have the very perfect example of John Davis (who discovered Davis' Straits, and died in 1605) in those days, and of Captain Cook in a much later age, to show how religion may be and has been the mainspring of the conduct of great sailors, even though their religion goes along with characteristics that may seem irreconcilable with a religious faith. But it was not only the seaman who believed himself one of a chosen people. That conviction was shared by the merchant who went long

voyages for gain, and by the capitalist who financed the merchant.

The mediaeval Church had set her face against the belief that the pursuit of wealth was a lawful occupation. Her theologians held that money-getting was a proof of avarice, and that avarice was a sin. The papal court at Rome, the higher clergy elsewhere, might be ostentatious and luxurious. But still the Church set her face against the ideal of developing Nature's resources for the use of men. The Puritan with all his faults was the reverse of this: he practised a rigid simplicity in his private life, but devoted his energies to business which meant the piling up of wealth and the development of the world; he thus went far towards the solution of the economic problem—a moderate and stationary standard of expenditure for those who have the immediate control of wealth combined with a real increase of the total which all must share. Indeed it seemed that traditional religion stood with a drawn sword guarding the entrance to an Eden in which was to be found not only scientific truth but also the material bounty of God. England believed that it was her function to lead the way in forcing an entrance for mankind into this paradise.

Like the Protestants of England, the orthodox Spaniards had a dream and a vision of the same kind. The Spanish Empire was based upon religious ideals. But the English ideals though crude were less crude than those of Spain. We understood, what the Spaniard did not, that the gold of the waving corn is more precious than yellow metal, and that the spirit works in its own way demanding an atmosphere of freedom.

(2) Before the South African War we were apt to pride ourselves on muddling through. That pride received a fall, and now most Britons are congratulating

themselves that at the beginning of last August we had an Expeditionary Force which could be mobilized in a few hours, and a fleet ready for action. The successful conduct of the government of an empire demands the same high qualities as any other work of note ; and we have not in fact been such muddlers as other peoples, and we ourselves, sometimes imagine. We have often seemed to be in a state of intellectual muddlement because we were trying to take all the facts into consideration, and were thinking over the permanent principles of our policy. In this sense, but in this sense only, we have always been a muddled people whenever we were engaged in empire-building.

When a man takes a few selected facts of any situation into account and rules out all the others, if those selected facts happen to dominate he will be easily and quickly successful, but otherwise he will be lost ; likewise the actions of a nation which has set its heart on achieving a certain object for a few years will be easy to follow and to appreciate, while the actions of those trained through hundreds of years will be unselfconscious and perhaps mysterious ; but if the training has been good they will be very effective.

Under Elizabeth we set ourselves with a tremendous energy to lay the foundations of the empire of the New World ; we laid them deep and systematically ; Elizabeth encouraged our sea rovers as far as she dared, she also encouraged the men of the Low Countries as her auxiliaries in the war against Spain. Burleigh, quite systematically, built up industries from the point of view of sea-power ; the fisheries were to be encouraged as a school for seamen ; we were to make our own powder and our own cannon, we were to have a plentiful supply of naval stores—and as a result, in 1588, our fleet was

more numerous than the Spanish Armada, our ships could sail faster and nearer the wind, and our guns shot more quickly and harder. But more important than this our religion was a religion of freedom and order, for although the main strength of English religion was moving towards Puritanism and the Puritans were not tolerant, still there was a strong religious element which though traditional was not Roman, an element which made possible the existence of such a family as the Ferrers, and such an establishment as the religious community of Little Gidding, and which represented gentleness and charity; moreover, Puritanism itself did achieve toleration with the appearance of the Society of Friends. There was therefore a spirit in England which offered a welcome to religious refugees of the reforming societies throughout Europe, and, besides that, the non-religious people in England, led by the Queen, were zealously anxious for religious peace as long as it could be reconciled with some measure of order.

Thus both the religious and non-religious elements of England combined to draw over to us the pick of the middle and industrial classes of Europe, and this most important result may be regarded as part of the fixed and conscious policy of the nation.

(3) Our advantages over other nations have on the whole been sufficiently described in Seeley's *Expansion of England*; it is only necessary here to emphasize the great importance of the fact that we were an insular nation, and so able to keep ourselves comparatively free from the entanglements of continental policy. This, as Seeley has pointed out, enabled us to concentrate our energies much more completely than the Spaniards or the Dutch or the French could do, on the acquisition of the empire of the New World; but furthermore, this

concentration on the New World and aloofness from the Old World affected the spirit of our nation and the quality of the work we did. In the Modern Age we have never wished or attempted to conquer Europe, we have not wished to be supreme on the Continent, we have taken part in continental strife only to the extent that ourselves and our supremacy in the New World was at stake.

Oliver Cromwell might have been beguiled into taking up the sword of Gustavus Adolphus and leading the Protestant armies of Europe, rightly or wrongly he resisted the temptation, and instead we fell to quarrelling with the Dutch—our religious allies—over the prize of maritime supremacy; on the surface this looks like the policy of the backslider, but it is possible that fundamentally we were never more true to our mission. So, as a matter of fact, we addressed ourselves to a possible problem instead of an impossible one. It was necessary that the world should be opened up to the vital civilization of Europe, means of communication had to be established over all the seas radiating out from and returning to Europe; the streams of commerce with their collecting and distributing centres had to be organized, and derelict continents peopled with emigrants from the progressive nations—the primal command must be obeyed, 'Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth', and the human family thus extended must be kept in touch the one part with the other, or brought into touch where it had been for ages separated, so that in material, intellectual, and spiritual things there should be interchange and co-operation.

As the leading nations had not learnt to co-operate in equality and peace, it seemed necessary that the work should proceed under the supremacy of one, and it was

this supremacy which we determined to win. The impossible problem which we avoided was the attainment of supremacy of one nation over all the others in Europe : this object did not correspond with the accomplishment of any useful piece of work, neither does it so correspond now. Europe never has been under the dominion of one nation for a thousand years ; it last happened in the days of Charlemagne—what we call the Dark Ages. (It is, however, true that the acknowledged supremacy of one nation over all the world to-day should make possible the abolition of armaments, and no doubt if we are so foolish as not to arrive at that result some better way, we shall deserve the supremacy of one.) So the real gist of our advantage was that the continental nations were wasting much of their strength in useless and demoralizing rivalry, while we were bending our main energies to a great and really necessary piece of work.

The secret of our success and our glory was that we were doing real work towards shaping the material earth itself and the organization of man upon it, so that this planet might become a perfected whole, achieving its mission ; in fact, we stood for work rather than life, for the future rather than the present, for achievement rather than enjoyment.

Our constitutional and social history during the period brings out this ideal ; we organized ourselves for an object, not for the sake of the organization, nor, indeed, for the sake of the people.

The Tudor form of government being a popular and enlightened despotism, would seem to have been the best for the purpose of attaining the sovereignty of the New World, and no doubt it fulfilled admirably its function of organizing the beginnings of the enterprise ; but success

was eventually achieved with a form of organization more subtle, much more mysterious, and better adapted for attaining quick but lasting results over an area co-extensive with the globe. The English Parliament has been called the mother of parliaments, and so she is. In the later Middle Ages we established a most advanced system of constitutional government which, from the practical point of view, broke down in the fifteenth century to recover itself in the seventeenth, but the success of this constitutional government during the eighteenth century was of a peculiar kind. Our government during the eighteenth century was in truth an aristocracy, if by that is understood the rule of the best, and if by best we mean the most efficient in view of the national policy. From the point of view of a formal constitution, it became, as the years went by, more and more anomalous and more corrupt. The actual government was in the hands of the House of Commons, the members of which were theoretically elected by the constituencies, that is to say, the shires and towns of the country, but as a matter of fact, they were mainly appointed by the House of Lords, whose members were the great landowners, the leaders of the landed aristocracy. The essence of the situation was a world to be conquered (the New World, not the Old World), and all the strong men in England, whether their traditions were religious or commercial or military, inspired or inflamed to effect the conquest. Although the direct political power was in the hands of the landed aristocracy, no caste feeling was allowed seriously to hamper the national ideal, for after the attainment of the religious toleration of all Protestants in 1689 there was no serious cleavage in the solid phalanx of our military, commercial, and Puritan efficiency. Indeed, as the

foreigner observed, we were a nation of shopkeepers, that is to say, the commercial element in the phalanx was becoming predominant. Families soon forget their origin; no doubt there were many families in the eighteenth century who assumed a blue-blooded purity of caste, but, as Lecky has pointed out, they often enough owed the establishment of their prosperity to a merchant or a banker.

Thus the British system in the eighteenth century worked, partly indeed, on account of long and great traditions and a certain national genius for government—the cause or effect of those traditions, but more especially because the adventurous element was given a new world to explore, the military element a new world to conquer, the commercial and industrial element an unlimited market, and the religious element visions of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the whole nation a new world to construct; the system did not work on its own merits as a system.

The best simple illustration of what we have been saying is the important and well-known share that the Scots have taken in the development and administration of the British Empire; they have entered into it so wholeheartedly and identified themselves with it so thoroughly because it has given unlimited scope to their magnificent national vitality; as to the Highlanders, it is a household word how the elder Pitt recognized their genius for warfare—fighting they must have and fighting they were given. What our Indian administration owes to Scotland is equally well known, her part in Indian evangelization is perhaps less familiar, though not less glorious. Canada and Australasia give their testimony to the enterprise of the Scots in all departments of life, and the scope that was offered to them.

Another illustration of how much the system depended on its object is given by the immediate collapse which occurred as soon as the object was attained ; but we shall have to return to this later.

We have seen how England provided scope for the enterprise of her sons, and, as always is the case when there is something real to be done, there existed in Britain to a very considerable extent the Napoleonic ideal of the career open to talent ; but what about the unenterprising, the people who would have preferred to go on living in the old way, or indeed the inefficient—that is to say, inefficient from the point of view of the national ideal ? There were mainly two classes to be considered, the peasantry on the land and the craftsmen in the towns ; if the bulk of the land had continued to be held by an irremovable peasantry, wishing to continue a more or less immemorial system of subsistence-farming, and impervious to the idea of the sovereignty of the New World, the realization of that idea would have been hampered at every step ; the solution of the problem was a simple one—to get practically all the land into the possession of large proprietors who were imbued with the ideal of expansion, and for them to form an alliance with some of the more progressive of the peasantry as tenant farmers, then with inexorable power the landlords and farmers could and did dictate a progressive policy for the land. Thus the land, its occupiers and cultivators, was made into an organism highly sensitive to the national ideal. This process was not indeed complete until the early years of the nineteenth century, but had then been going on for a hundred years and more.

The development in commerce and industry was similar ; the mediaeval system by which industry was

monopolized by highly organized guilds, who were mainly occupied in each town in supplying the needs of that town, and who held control of entry into the craft could, and probably would, have hampered economic progress even more effectively than a persistent body of peasant proprietors. Commerce indeed was naturally controlled by the wealthy few, who no doubt were convinced that it was their duty to devote the resources at their disposal to the development of the world, and, as we have noticed, the opposition of the Church had for long been removed; but commerce is based on industry, for it consists in the exchange of the products of industry. There were two ways in which industry could be brought under the control of those in touch with the national ideal: (1) as soon as the artificer produces for a distant market he is in the hands of the merchants who conduct the exchange, this brings industry immediately and directly under the control of commerce; (2) the so-called capitalist system by which the instruments of production—that is to say the tools, machines, material, and organization necessary for the conduct of industry—come into the possession of a few rich men, be they merchants or be they captains of industry.

By these methods, happening of themselves or consciously pursued, industry and the industrial population also became part of that organism or body, of which the directing head consisted of those inspired by the national ideal. In no other country of the world at that time was the system of national organization at all comparable in sensitiveness, in no other country could the resources of the nation be applied so quickly and so completely to the attainment of an object.

It is of course notorious that there was a dark side to this economic policy—indeed by the time that the

national ideal was achieved that dark side was seen to be intensely black and lowering. Britain was ceasing to be only these small islands, and was becoming the British Empire; this involved economic revolution, and we have noticed how the sensitiveness and adaptability were attained which rendered this revolution possible; this sensitiveness was sufficient to make the revolution possible, but it was not nearly sufficient to remove all friction. The weak, the ignorant, and the backward always suffer when there is an economic upheaval, unless the process is conducted with transcendent skill and elaborate method; no such skill or method was at our disposal, but we established a vast system of public and private charity to save the myriads who fell out of the ranks from actual starvation and despair.

Here, at the risk of complexity, it is necessary to review the period of preparation (roughly speaking, from the accession of Elizabeth to the fall of Charles I); in the sixteenth century there was very generally over Europe an economic upheaval, consequent on the break-up of the Middle Ages and the discovery of the New World; to meet the stress there was very generally a poor-law system established. In England, as in other countries, the Government exerted itself to stem the economic tide, to maintain a vigorous and contented peasantry on the soil, and to save the corporate life and traditions of the craftsmen from the economic flood. Thus far indeed the national policy of work rather than life, the idea of hammering the world into shape at all costs, including the sacrifice of one's own comfort if need be, and one's own health, had perhaps been envisaged, but had not been embarked upon. But with the fall of Charles I this conservative and domestic policy collapsed, the

power was speedily concentrated in the hands of the efficient of all classes, and the homes of the weak were sacrificed on the altar of the magnificent ideal of the strong.

Thus when we emerged in 1815 completely victorious and completely successful (except for the loss of the United States), having achieved the empire of the New World, we had incurred a debt, in the intense misery and degradation of our people, which was not experienced by our defeated rivals.

After 1815 the policy to be pursued was obviously to strengthen the Empire and to look after our people, and this in the main has been our accepted policy ; but, as we have already suggested, with the attainment of the traditional objective a certain amount of disintegration set in.

We had finished the task which we had set ourselves, we had won the empire of the New World. What next ? asked our strong men. The answer was—Cosmopolitanism ; the Old World also must be brought into the scheme. We were a nation of shopkeepers, we had beaten Napoleon with our industry and our credit ; our commercial and industrial classes now set to work to extort political supremacy at home from the landowners, and to work out cosmopolitanism in the commercial sphere. There was first a Glasgow School and then a Manchester School, shipping and cotton, Adam Smith and Richard Cobden. The intellectual system produced is generally known as Free Trade. We had won the New World on the principle of exclusion, no other nation was allowed to take part except in subordination to us. Adam Smith taught that the wealth of the nations was the wealth of a nation, that the good of one was the good of all, that natural liberty involved a universal freedom for manufacture and for trade ; the whole system was

shot through and through with idealism, with the knowledge that the economic well-being of man is part of the natural order of the will of God. As the Puritans had overthrown the restraints of the mediaeval Church, so the free-trader was to overcome the restraints of a self-centred nationalism. Spiritually and intellectually, as well as economically, the shopkeeper was the strongest man in Britain, and the shopkeeper's philosophy conquered.

There were two grave defects in the system ; for one of them the shopkeeper was directly responsible, for the other he was not. In the first place the system contained a hideous logical error, which can be stated shortly as follows : the free-traders accepted self-interest as the motive in a system whose main doctrine was equality of opportunity, when of course these two principles are incompatible, the wolf and the lamb ; self-interest as generally understood must destroy equality of opportunity. As a matter of fact, this defect has vitiated our economic system through and through ; in the United States its ravages have been even more fatal. Secondly, the system was one-sided ; besides commerce and industry, it was necessary that cosmopolitanism should take religion and nationality into account. To this, however, the shopkeeper might fairly retort that it was not his business, he had done his part ; let the Church take religion and the landowners nationality.

Upon the whole, it is true that the Church and the landowners have been very dilatory in doing their share of the work, and even negatively their criticism of the shopkeeper was for long ineffective ; as a result of the French Revolution they both had become reactionary and obscurantist, and having lost faith in the things of

the mind they allowed the shopkeeper to establish a monopoly in truth.

However, working along their own lines, they have done something, and let us begin with the Church. The Oxford Movement re-emphasized for us the catholic idea, and their work has now attained remarkable success; not only among Anglicans but in the other communities—especially the Presbyterians and not excluding the Quakers—the question now is not only what of the individual and his salvation, but what of the Church, and what is the Church. The catholic ideal is a relationship in which every man and every community is free and good and capable of realizing its mission—in fact, an existence open to all in the power and in the presence of God. This ideal in the sphere of organized religion is the counterpart of free trade in the subordinate sphere of economics. Unfortunately, the Oxford Movement was not altogether fortunate in making its object clear; to the Evangelical it seemed to mean sovereignty of the Bishop of Rome over all that Britons held most dear; to the ordinary man it meant processions, vestments, lights, and incense; however, that period is passing, and we can feel growing up around us an evangelical catholicism.

As to the landowner: he was beaten by the shopkeeper in 1832, for the Reform Act amounted to the enfranchisement of the middle classes; he was beaten again in 1849, for the success of Cobden and Bright and their Anti-Corn Law agitation meant the dominance of free-trade economics over the mind and the policy of the nation. Beaten from his position, and unwilling and incapable to meet his opponent in the intellectual field, the landowner, under the leadership of Disraeli, fell back on the traditional imperialism of Elizabeth, which had

been supposed to be superseded since 1815. But in advocating 'forms of permanence and power' Disraeli was only emphasizing the need in the political sphere for some scheme of relationships without which the individual man is unable to operate.

The teaching of Disraeli was followed up by that of Joseph Chamberlain, the gist of whose policy it was, that the British Empire would be hampered in its development, if not actually strangled, unless it were provided with an organization, that is to say, a scheme of relationships appropriate to its life. No doubt his early experience of the government of a great and growing city opened his mind to the human need for forms of permanence and power.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, beside the ordinary man there existed two fairly well defined schools of thought; there was the Little Englander, who believed in the general principles of the Empire but had no confidence in the actual organization which had been built up—he considered the more abstract thought of his ancestors to be admirable, but the work of their hands deplorable. On the other hand, there was the Imperialist (whom the Little Englander called Jingo), who did not interest himself much in general ideas, but knew that his ancestors had won the empire of the New World, and intended that he should keep it; moreover, he believed that the British had a special genius for the task denied to other races. The South African War changed all that; the Little Englander could not get over the impressive evidence which was provided that the Dominions themselves believed passionately in the Empire. The Imperialists were disillusioned to see that it taxed the resources of the whole Empire to overcome the resistance of a few thousand brave and obstinate farmers of a race similar indeed to our own.

Thus we all now really believe in the Empire, the work of the souls, the brains, and the hands of our ancestors, and we none of us really believe in exclusiveness ; a liberal imperialism has emerged which enabled us to make the magnificent experiment of granting self-government to South Africa.

Traditional British policy is the making of the world, at whatever present sacrifice, into a more and more perfect home for the united human family, and the British Empire is the preliminary sketch for the future federation of the world. It may be objected that both these things are as true or more true of the United States, but this only strengthens the argument, for they came from us.

We have elaborated very carefully (but, as was shown above, very imperfectly) the economic scheme appropriate for a united world, we have experimented in the political scheme and done something in religion ; but in all three of these departments, though we have experimented much, we have thought little. Except for Socialism, there has been little original and vital political thinking in Britain since Adam Smith and Burke, and an utter dearth since Cobden ; we have, with the one exception, simply been stretching old ideas to meet new demands, or indeed, sometimes simply for something to do. We have allowed practice to outrun theory, which is obscurantism and the negation of even the possibility of progress—our feet are taking us whither our minds know not.

To us has been entrusted leadership in politics and economics, and recently our failure has been great (though our achievement has still been great) ; if we had provided the world with a true politic adequate to the

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conditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is inconceivable that the Germans, who are an educated people, with their minds open to ideas, could have fallen so far as they have done under the sway of a system of thought untenable in logic, hideous in sentiment, and glaringly incompatible with the religion that we all profess.

The reason for our intellectual failure has lain in just that analysing method which, when restricted to its proper place, is so often an essential of success ; analysis no doubt should generally come first, but synthesis must always follow it. We have analysed life into religion, politics, and economics, and have somehow persuaded ourselves that to bring them together is to sin against the light. The Socialists alone have attempted a synthesis, and with all their defects they are not barren of thought.

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ECONOMIC ASPECTS

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THE WAR AND ITS ECONOMIC ASPECTS¹

FOR many years—from the time when I first went as a student to Germany—I have had a warm place in my heart for the German people. Like many other young Englishmen, it was in Germany I first caught the infection of the scientific spirit, the spirit that cares as much for widening the bounds of knowledge as for handing on knowledge already acquired; and what I saw of social intercourse in Göttingen and Dresden made me appreciate the *Gemüthlichkeit*, the cheerful simple kindness, which characterizes so large a part of the people. I have believed that our two nations possessed many traits in common, and had some common interests and duties; and I have done what I could to promote a good understanding between them. And when the University of Berlin, in conferring an honorary degree, took occasion to describe me as ‘a true friend of our nation’, the epithet was not, I think, altogether undeserved.

To me, then, this war is a special and personal grief. It means the end, for many years to come, probably for my lifetime, of the hopes I have cherished of amicable co-operation between the two countries; the cessation—though that, indeed, in comparison, is but a small matter—of friendly interchange of thought with men

¹ Lecture to the Workers’ Educational Association at the University of Birmingham, on the evening of November 18, 1914.

whose work for economic science and for social reform I have long admired.

And though I am convinced that the German Government and the German nation supporting it are profoundly in the wrong ; though I am sure that it made a fatally unwise decision in determining, at all risks, to back up—nay, to prompt—Austria ; though I feel that it has quite misunderstood both the purposes and the temper of England ; though I have not the slightest doubt that it is the bounden duty of every Englishman to do all that in him lies to bring about Germany's complete defeat ; I am not going now to deny to Germany the qualities which first called forth my respect, and I am not going, if I can help it, to pay any German the poor compliment of returning his ' hatred '. Hatred, indeed, blinds the eyes ; and England wants to be as clear-sighted as possible to bring this war to a speedy and successful conclusion.

Perhaps it was a foolish dream that two States situated as Britain and Germany, the one with a tradition already old of maritime supremacy, the other with all the strength and combined self-confidence and self-distrust of the parvenu, could remain in friendship. The comparison is not mine : it is Prince von Bülow's, the late Chancellor, who in his remarkable book is continually picturing Germany as the *novus homo*, the new arrival, forcing his way to the side of the old-established world-power. I have had friends in England who have urged upon me that, whatever might be the virtues of the body of the German people, the virus of Bismarckian statecraft was working in the small governing class which really determined the nation's policy. And in recent years there certainly have been some disquieting features in the mental attitude even of that Germany

I was myself in touch with, which have given me more than an occasional qualm. In academic circles the legitimate pride in German science seemed sometimes to have become almost an obsession, and to have the effect of shutting out of sight what was being done in other lands. It seemed to be hardly realized that what Germany had to teach the western world in the way of thoroughness and method had already been pretty well learnt, and that there were intellectual qualities of almost equal value, qualities of lucidity and discrimination and balance, which could perhaps be better learnt elsewhere—even in the despised France. There was a curious national self-satisfaction which failed to perceive that the great new ideas, the waves of intellectual inspiration within and without the realm of scholarship and research, which were affecting the minds of this generation all over the world, were now almost all of them coming from other directions than Germany. Again, it is enough to turn to France, and mention such names as Pasteur and Rodin and Loisy and Bergson. And with this narrowing of the horizon went what I could not help thinking was apparently an almost total inability to understand the point of view of other nations. I have been wont to tell my German friends, for instance, that so long as England contented itself with its tiny army, the one thing on which all political parties in this country agreed was the absolute necessity of a big navy, and that it was hopeless to expect ever to outbuild England in ships: that dependent as England was for the bulk of its food on sea-borne trade, it simply dare not allow itself to be caught up with. I have told them again, that while England would not join France in aggression, it would certainly not stand by and see France humiliated; that for no

friendship of Germany would England abandon the *Entente*. It seemed impossible, however, to make my German friends realize that a nation which proposed to have both the strongest army and the strongest navy in the world was not going the best way to work to promote a peaceable temper either in itself or in others, and that, great as were the virtues of Germany, it was not obviously more lovable to the British public than its neighbour across the Rhine.

The word for it all, I am afraid I must say, is simply 'conceit'. But then I have reflected that there have been times when we ourselves were similarly difficult to get on with. I suppose nobody, at this time of day, would say that Palmerston was positively ingratiating in his dealings with other countries, and if we want to see how confined was the outlook of the middle-Victorian Englishman we have but to go back to Matthew Arnold's criticisms or Thackeray's unconscious exemplifications. And as I believed England had become a little more tolerant, a little less self-pleased, a little less heavy-handed than in Palmerston's time, so I hoped that the German phase of self-glorification and disregard for the feelings of others would also pass away, without a great cataclysm. I was mistaken; but I am not ashamed of having ascribed to Germany a reserve of statesmanship and cool sense which it is now apparent it did not possess.

It is with the economic aspects of the war that I purpose especially to deal. Their importance must not be exaggerated. If the naval forces of the enemy and of the Allies were equal, Germany would be in a far safer position than this country; for Germany has not sacrificed its agriculture to its manufactures to anything like the same extent as Great Britain, and it is

much more able to run the risk of a stoppage of foreign food supplies. The mere magnitude of our trade could not have saved us. Moreover, difficult as Germany's economic position is—as I shall shortly point out—it is not so difficult as to compel, by itself, a speedy termination of the war. The natural resources of the country are great, the credit of the Government is good, and for the first few months some important trades have been kept busy by the manufacture of war material. It is perhaps impossible to find out what the state of affairs actually is in Germany just now ; but I should not be surprised to learn that life on the surface has hitherto gone on very much as in England ; that such distress as there may have been, has been relieved ; and that there is not, as yet, any widely diffused popular discontent. And of course it would be quite absurd for us in England to pretend that the outbreak of war did not at first give a violent shock to the fabric of industry on this side the Channel. Even if we wanted to conceal the fact, the German authorities get our English newspapers, and know perfectly well all about our local distress committees, and about short time in the cotton trade and all the other English trades that are under the weather.

And yet, though the economic factor is not the most vital one, it is one of essential importance, and one which, as the months go on, and as the German forces are steadily driven back, will make itself felt with an ever accumulating weight, and hasten the final submission. For if only Britain and the Allies can retain the mastery of the sea, between the economic difficulties of England and Germany there is a fundamental difference. England's difficulties were due in the main to the complicated mechanism of modern credit, international pay-

ments, and contracts for the future. Germany did not feel these particular difficulties to anything like the same extent; it is able to boast, for instance, that it did not need a *moratorium*. That, however, is simply because London had become the credit centre of the world and the pivot of the delicate apparatus of the foreign exchanges. But the temporary breakdown of the credit and market system was capable of being repaired, and has in large measure been repaired already, by co-operation between the Government, the banks, and the great organized interests which are involved, and by the assistance thus rendered possible to bill-brokers, to merchants with outstanding foreign accounts, and to dealers in futures. Meanwhile, the productive capacities, the mutual wants, on which British economic activity, at home and abroad, was really based have remained substantially as before. To begin with, quite two-thirds of the annual product of British industry is normally consumed at home. There remain the same needs to be supplied, and so long as our people can import their food and the necessary raw materials, there is no reason why most of this consumption should not be resumed now that the first alarm is over. Of our export trade, the cessation of business with Germany and Austria, even with Belgium and Turkey thrown in, withdrew only between an eighth and a ninth. But, on the other hand, the market in the United Kingdom and in the British Colonies which Germany was losing at the same time can evidently be supplied, to some extent at any rate, from British factories; not to mention Germany's other oversea markets in which, as we shall find good reason for believing, it must be increasingly difficult and soon impossible for her to dispose of her goods. Even making large allowances for American and Japanese

enterprise, there are certainly quite promising openings in these previous German markets for fresh British trade. Accordingly, when once credit and exchange difficulties have been got over, the prospect is that Britain will regain, and more than regain, all it has lost. For the time being we may be said, compared with last year, to have lost about a third of our foreign trade. It should be observed, indeed, that a distinct falling-off in our trade had already become visible as early as April, and there are indications that it would have declined considerably since, even had there been no war. Moreover, much of the loss of trade has been due to our own prohibitions of export, not to failure of demand in neutral markets. These considerations do not remove, they only mitigate our sense of the severity of the initial blow. But the process of recovery is already taking place. The total volume of our import and export trade, which was 37 per cent less in August than in July, was only 31 per cent less in September, and 21 per cent less in October; and this, allowing for the one day short of September, means a steady improvement of about 8 per cent on the July figures each month since August. The percentage of unemployed in trade unions making returns jumped up from the low figure 2·8 at the end of July to 7·1 at the end of August. Even this was a good deal lower than has frequently been seen in periods of really bad trade. But at the end of September it had fallen to 5·9, and at the end of October to 4·4, which is actually below the average of the last ten years. And now that the Lancashire cotton trade—always one of the least stable portions of our industrial system—has begun to revive, we may count upon a still more rapid recovery.

But compare this position with that of Germany.

There the obstacles to trade are not of the secondary order, resulting from the temporary interruption in the delicate balance of the market machinery ; they are of that absolutely primary character which is involved in the sheer physical impossibility of obtaining the imports and disposing of the exports to which its economic life has been adjusted.

Germany in the last half-century has been rapidly industrialized. Its industrial and commercial population, which in 1882 was only 45 per cent of the whole, was in 1895 50 per cent, and in 1907 56 per cent. There has been, as we all know, a most wonderful growth of manufactures, due partly to natural abilities, partly to the discovery of coal resources, which forty years ago were quite unknown. It is possible for a country, sufficiently vast in area and varied in resources, to expand its manufactures without ceasing to be self-contained : the United States would be a case in point, were it not for its cotton export. But in a country like Germany, its vast manufacturing expansion could not have taken place without the acquisition of a wide foreign market ; and as manufactures require raw materials, and as foreigners cannot buy unless they also sell, large exports have necessitated large imports. The exports of Germany have steadily been coming to consist more and more of manufactured goods, and its imports more and more of food-stuffs and raw materials. Germany, again, might conceivably have been so placed geographically as to have access by land to its chief markets. It has indeed access by land to a large part of the European continent : but that has only furnished a comparatively small part of the market she has obtained. As long ago as 1900, it was reckoned by a distinguished German economist that 70 per cent of German

foreign trade was overseas, and the proportion to-day is even greater. Accordingly, so long as Germany is unable to command the seas, every single German cargo, inwards or outwards, is a fresh hostage to the fortune of war.

This is not the mere optimism of an English enemy : it is what the economists of Germany have long ago quite clearly recognized. The representatives of German high finance may talk as they please about the vast accumulation of wealth in Germany, and suggest that it can bear with ease even the enormous burdens of a war like this. But the economist knows that the only form of wealth on which a nation can rely in times like these are forms which can feed and clothe it, and that to distribute these means of life they must either be doled out by the State or earned by employment.

Fourteen years ago the leading economists of the German Empire combined to publish a series of lectures in support of the Navy Bill. They were issued, in a handsome but cheap form, under the significant title *Handels- und Machtpolitik*—‘the politics of trade and power’. The recurrent refrain in one after the other of these lectures was always this : that unless the sea could be kept open the wellbeing of the German nation was insecure. As one of them said—a leader in social reform and in international co-operation for industrial betterment, whom it is grief even to think of as an enemy—‘In one way or another, from 24 to 26 millions of Germans’, out of a population, at the time, of some 55, ‘are dependent for their livelihood and work upon unrestricted import and export by water. The freedom of the sea and vigorous competition in the world’s markets are therefore questions of life and death for the nation, and questions in which the working classes are most deeply concerned.’

Since this was written, Germany's position in this respect has become even worse. It is unnecessary to labour the point, for it has been put with the utmost emphasis recently by Prince von Bülow. In 1864, he reminds us, Bismarck, in reply to a supposed English threat of war, remarked to the English Ambassador: 'Well, what harm can you do us? At worst you can throw a few bombs.' Bismarck, says Bülow, 'was right at that time. We were then as good as unassailable by England, in spite of her mighty sea power.' 'To-day'—he goes on—'it is different. We are now vulnerable at sea. We have entrusted millions to the ocean.' If Germany had been deprived of them, he insists, it 'could not have returned to the comfortable existence of a purely inland state. We should have been placed in the position of being unable to employ and support a considerable number of our millions of inhabitants at home. The result would have been an economic crisis which might easily attain the proportions of a national catastrophe.'

According to these economists and to Bülow the one way to ward off this catastrophe was to build a gigantic navy. It is not worth while arguing that they were mistaken: it is too late, and, in any case, English opinion is too much suspected to carry any weight. The bare fact is sufficient that Germany has chosen to plunge into the conflict at such a time and in such a way that, in spite of its great navy, the dreaded catastrophe is now actually approaching.

A few figures may be useful by way of illustration. To begin with, quite 40 per cent of Germany's export trade and 44 per cent of her import trade has been with the countries with which she is now at war. To its allies and to neutrals it cannot convey merchandise in

its own ships (except perhaps in the Western Baltic), because all its ships that have not been captured are now confined to the ports. It can dispense with its own vessels and do its business by means of neutral shipping, or through neutral countries, only for a small and decreasing part of its trade ; and this for several reasons. In the first place, the neutral shipping available is very limited. The shipping of the neutral countries is only about one-fourth that of the world, and only a portion of this fourth can be spared for German cargoes. Next, a large part of what Germany might import is absolute or conditional contraband, and will be avoided by neutral ship-owners. Then again, the Allies have put an embargo on the export from their shores of certain indispensable materials for which they are the chief sources of supply, e. g. wool ; and England has prohibited the import of an important product, sugar, of which it was Germany's one considerable customer. Indirect trade, through neutral lands, between residents in the allied States and in enemy countries is being stopped by certificates of origin and declarations of destination. The neighbouring neutral countries, moreover, especially Denmark and the Scandinavian kingdoms, partly for their own sake, in order to ensure their own supplies of food, partly to avoid undesirable complications with the Allies, are now prohibiting the export of food-stuffs and of a long list of commodities capable of being used for war purposes. And finally, the proclamation of the North Sea as a military area, and still more, the fact that, owing to Germany's initiative in the laying of mines, it obviously is exceedingly dangerous to shipping, will send up freight and insurance rates on cargoes sent by the North Sea to prohibitive figures.

The advocates in Germany of a great policy of naval construction were wont to have the possibilities of 'blockade' very much on the brain; and a German friend of mine used to write in *Nauticus*, the year-book of the navy movement, long articles on historic blockades, such as that of the Southern States at the time of the Cotton Famine. To-day the German coast is not technically 'blockaded' at all; that will come at a later stage of the war, possibly. But the objects of a blockade are being secured, if less dramatically hardly less effectively.

As to food, as I have before said, owing to measures of agrarian protection, Germany is better off than we should be in a like case. The chief bread corn of the people is still rye, and practically the whole German supply is grown within the Empire. But white wheaten bread has, in recent years, been coming into more general use; and even the so-called 'black bread' has a good deal of wheat flour in it, so that wheat now constitutes about two-fifths of the nation's bread. Of this wheat, a good deal more than a third has lately been imported, mainly from Russia. It is hardly conceivable that this deficiency should be made up from other sources. And it is a commonplace in economics that when prices are determined by competition the effect upon price of a deficiency in supply is altogether out of proportion to the deficiency itself. It is a significant thing that weeks after the plan of fixing food prices by authority has been discontinued in England as unnecessary, the German Government has been compelled to have recourse to it; with this notable difference, that while neither corn nor bread was ever in the English list, it is the price of corn which now demands the German Government's most anxious attention. 'The situation', it is officially

explained, 'has been complicated by the stoppage of the usual imports of fodder barley from Russia. As a result, the more valuable German barley has risen to a high price, and rye, which is now cheaper than barley, has been used for fodder instead of being saved for bread.' When we reflect that of late years almost half the German supply of barley has come from Russia, we can well believe 'the situation is complicated'. It looks, indeed, like the beginning of the end, even though the end should be a good way off.

I shall assume, then, that the Allies are going to win, and that economic pressure will contribute more and more, as the war goes on, to that consummation. What is going to be the outcome? Much doubtless that we can as yet hardly foresee; but there are a few large results that are beginning to make themselves discernible.

One result will be the further consolidation of the Empire. It is an old jest, but one which contains a great truth, that we ought to erect a statue to Kruger as one of the Creators of the British Empire. Certainly the Kaiser in that sense will deserve a much finer one. The real danger to the imperial tie is not conscious alienation between the several sister nations, but an unconscious drifting apart, due to the strength of local interests and the weakness of the centripetal forces; not antipathy, but simply the want of mutual intercourse. A war in which the self-governing Dominions voluntarily take an active part reveals to themselves the strength of their sense of imperial solidarity; the very fighting side by side creates a mutual knowledge, mutual understanding and respect, a fund of common memories; and it is out of such a soil that the confederate organization, appropriate for so unique an Empire as ours, is most likely to spring. Just as the creation, in the

decade just past, of the beginnings of a new imperial constitution in the Imperial Conference and the Imperial Secretariate, would have been impossible but for the wave of sentiment which spread over the Dominions during the Boer War, so the still closer intercourse, not only between individual Britons, but also between the several British Governments engaged in a common and world-wide task, cannot but contribute towards the solution of the great British problem : the problem of allying self-governing nationalities in a permanent confederation for common purposes. As it is, the German attack is already converting the loose congeries of Dominions into, not indeed a *Zollverein*, or Customs Union, but a *Kriegverein*, or War Union—an organization for military and naval co-operation. The capture of the *Emden* by the *Sydney* is worth, not only for imperial sentiment, but also for imperial organization, far more than the *Emden* cost us in captured merchantmen.

This is one more illustration of the strength in human affairs both of circumstance and of the unconscious. My German friends, I have noticed, pay us what I have always thought the undeserved compliment of ascribing all our national success to conscious policy, pursued with consistency generation after generation. If only they could discover just what our policy has been and is, they could imitate it, they seem to think, and get the same results ! It is in vain I have told them that I thought we commonly had no policy, but just muddled along somehow. That, of course, was a playful exaggeration ; just as it is an exaggeration to say that the British Empire has grown simply because it has been attacked, and that it has been forced together only by outside pressure. But it contains quite as much of the

truth as the other view, which assigns everything to conscious policy—a truth which even the Germans will probably learn from this war. No one, for instance, could have expected that the grant of self-government to the Union of South Africa so soon after the Boer War, magnanimously wise as it was, would have borne imperial fruit so splendid and so speedy. The best missionary of the Empire in South Africa, the best reconciler of Boer and Briton, has been William II.

It would be absurd to compare the German colonial possessions, almost devoid of white settlers, and governed entirely from Berlin, with the constellation of self-governing States and mighty dependencies which constitute the British Empire. The German has never yet proved himself a good colonist in a new country, and that is one of not the least reasons why the German colonial territories are relatively so inconsiderable. The notion that Germany is over-full, and that the German people are suffocating for want of room for expansion, is one of those ideas which commend themselves to political theorists, and which have a certain currency when once set going, but have very little basis in fact. As a fact, not only is German emigration very small, about a tenth that of Great Britain, but in proportion to the total German population, it has been falling ever since 1891, and it is only one-sixth of what it was then. But if there is no reason to believe that colonies are craved for by would-be colonists, they have been made useful by Germany as centres for the distribution of German exports—the avowed object, for instance, of Kiaouchou—as well as for the purposes of coaling and wireless stations. The result of the war will be the loss of most of them, if not of all. The English Government will probably want to be as generous as possible when

the settlement comes ; but others will have a say in the matter besides the Government of Great Britain. Considering the circumstances under which it was acquired, not even Germany, I should imagine, can expect to get Kiaouchou back. And as for the rest, those too far off from any great British dominion to compel its attention, and really at the disposal of the English Government, may possibly be the subject of negotiation ; but German possessions which the Dominions have themselves conquered, and which are within their sphere of solicitude, will have to remain in the hands of their new masters. This will be a blow to Germany's pride and power which some of us might like to avoid ; but it will be inevitable.

Of more immediate interest to us in England is the dramatic transformation which the war is affecting in the economic policy of the Home Government. Under the pressure of necessity the Government, with the complete support of the nation, instantly abandoned the traditional policy of economic inaction. We now wake up every morning to find Government credit extended to some new department of commerce ; some branch of trade put under an embargo ; some enormous purchase of commodities undertaken, such as sugar ; some extensive new manufacture encouraged and financial assistance offered to investors, as for the production of dye-stuffs.

A transformation I have called it ; and yet, after all, it is only the sudden emergence in new fields of that fresh economic courage which has been so remarkably displayed in our recent social legislation. To those of us who are now middle-aged, nothing is more remarkable than the cheerful and unsentimental hopefulness which, in this present generation, has led the nation

confidently to tackle vast problems, calling for a huge and complicated administrative organization. With the general consent of all parties, the country has not only undertaken the insurance of the labouring classes against sickness, for which other countries provided precedents, and our own friendly societies most of the machinery; but it has embarked on the more novel, the practically quite unprecedented and far more socially important work of insurance against unemployment. The thought of it would have taken away the breath of our fathers, and yet it was all done in the most matter-of-course way. I do not think the significance of new departures like this has been sufficiently realized by the German observers who imagined the English were a decadent people.

Of the trade measures, breathing the same new spirit of economic courage, that have followed in rapid succession upon the outbreak of war, the most significant is the stepping of the Government into the arena of manufacture. As to the bill-broking machinery and the futures market, they have only to be put on their legs again and will march as before. But a country in which the Government accepts in principle the duty of 'guaranteeing' the 'permanent' production within the land of commodities previously imported from the enemy's country can never be as before.

There has been a great deal of talk about 'capturing German trade'. The Board of Trade has embarked on what is officially called 'a campaign'; it has compiled statistics of every imaginable article that Germany sells to the world, and that British manufacturers could conceivably supply; it holds 'Exchange Meetings' where would-be purchasers meet would-be producers. And this labour has not been thrown away; it has

helped to familiarize business men with the idea that 'there may be something in it'. Yet those—and there are some—who have felt a little uncomfortable about our setting out to deprive even Germans of their livelihood, may take this comfort. No number of statistical pamphlets and newspaper paragraphs would make the English business man take any practical steps to 'capture German trade' unless the matter were pressed upon him in some more evidently remunerative way. What is really happening is that buyers of German manufactures, both at home and abroad, are beginning to get to the end of their stocks, and are turning to English manufacturers for fresh supplies. In some cases manufacturers whose businesses are depressed in consequence of the war are finding it possible to give employment to their work-people by making some commodity, previously supplied from Germany, which they can turn out with their existing plant. If the revival of trade, during the war or after it, brings back their old customers, they can perhaps dispense with the new ones. But cases like these are not numerous, nor in themselves considerable. What every one knows who moves at all in the business world, is that any considerable invasion of the German markets means the installation of expensive plant; and manufacturers are not going to do that unless they have a reasonable prospect of working it long enough to get back what they have invested, with profit. The word which strikes the key-note of the present disposition of the business world is 'Continuity'. Very big capital expenditures, however desirable, will probably not be entered upon unless the Government follows the dye-stuff precedent and offers a financial guarantee, of debenture interest or the like. But many others of

smaller amount will probably be undertaken, if the war continues and if 'inquiries' from customers accumulate to a stimulating extent, without waiting for a formal guarantee; in the confidence, which I cannot doubt is a reasonable one, that when peace returns they will not be left in the lurch. Great stocks of German manufactures will, of course, have accumulated, by the time peace is made, and these will be thrown upon the market at almost any price. Somehow or other, and there are more ways than one, means will assuredly have to be found to prevent the sudden extinction of the newly created English business.

If I could hope that anything I could say would reach German ears, I should remark that the longer the war lasts the worse it will be for Germany, economically as well as politically. The longer it goes on, the more it will be straitened in its economic activity when peace returns. England has hitherto afforded Germany an elbow-room which has been highly convenient to it in the alternating expansion and contraction which form the cyclical movement of trade. This is very apparent to any one who looks into its industrial history and learns how it was it escaped so lightly from the great depression of 1901-2. That elbow-room is going to be restricted, and the more completely the longer it waits. It is not that the English people has been converted to a new economic creed; it is that the English people will come out of this war with a new attitude towards fellow Britishers and allies, and a new attitude towards enemies; and with new interests also to which its honour will be pledged.

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FOOD SUPPLIES IN WAR TIME.

FOR many years the British people have been warned by innumerable writers that in the event of war with a naval Power they ran the risk of famine and even of starvation by reason of the interruption of their overseas supplies of food. Only in July last one of our most popular novelists, in a vivid story, depicted the abject surrender of Great Britain to a small State after a war of about five weeks in consequence of the attacks of eight submarines upon vessels bringing food to our shores. Many people indeed were fully convinced that any interference with our commerce, even if it should be for only a few weeks, would reduce the whole population to dire straits.

It is quite true that we depend upon other countries for large supplies of food, and that the regularity of these supplies maintains prices at a moderate and uniform level in our markets. The precise extent of our purchases of imported food is not very readily stated. It is sufficient, as an instance of the difficulty, to cite the fact that although the whole of the £29,000,000 which we spent last year on corn and meal, other than wheat and flour, from abroad is commonly classed as food (as in a sense it is), when we are talking of food for direct human consumption it is clear that only a fraction of such grain as barley, oats, and maize should be regarded as foodstuffs in the ordinary acceptation of the term. In round figures it may be reckoned that about £200,000,000 per annum represents the amount

spent on imported foodstuffs (excluding beverages) of all kinds which are consumed by man. If tea, coffee, and cocoa be added the total would be rather more than £220,000,000, being an average of about £4 15s. per head of the population.

The sources of supply are various and widely distributed. In 1913 they ranked roughly in order of value of shipments of foodstuffs to the United Kingdom as follows: United States, Argentina, Denmark, Canada, India, Australia, Russia, Netherlands, Germany, New Zealand, Austria-Hungary, France, Spain, Ceylon. From Germany and Austria-Hungary our receipts were nearly all sugar, and from Ceylon, tea. Wheat came principally from the United States, Canada, India, Argentina, Australia, and Russia; meat (beef and mutton) from Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, and Uruguay; bacon, pork, and hams from the United States, Denmark, Netherlands, and Canada; rice from India; sugar from Germany, Austria, Cuba, Netherlands, and Belgium; butter and margarine from Denmark, Netherlands, Russia, Australia, Sweden, France, and New Zealand; cheese from Canada, New Zealand, and Netherlands; fruit from Spain, United States, France, Canada, Canary Islands, Costa Rica, Columbia; tea from India, Ceylon, Java, and China; cocoa from British West Africa, British West Indies, Netherlands, Brazil, and Switzerland; coffee from Brazil, Costa Rica, Columbia, Guatemala, India, and Mexico. This catalogue shows only very superficially the extent of the area from whence the greater part of our supplies come; smaller quantities are sent from many other countries. There is indeed scarcely any part of the world which does not in some degree contribute to the omnivorous appetite of John Bull. It is hardly necessary to observe

that under normal circumstances in the multitude of competitors there is safety for the customer, and that even under abnormal circumstances there is a great advantage to the buyer that so many are in the habit of selling to him and may be presumed to be anxious to continue to do so.

One result of this world-wide competition to provide John Bull with the necessities and luxuries of life is to make him very exigent in his demands. He is not content with a sufficient supply ; it must be of the kind which suits him. To take one of the commonest articles—not so very long ago he liked nothing but China tea, now on the whole he insists on having Indian or Ceylon tea. He is a creature of habit, and grumbles extremely if he is forced against his will to change it even to the extent of drinking another kind of tea. He has been in the past probably the most pampered person in the world in his choice of food, and a little less diversity of selection for a time would do him no harm.

From the list of countries given above it will be noticed that we got no food supplies of importance from our enemies except sugar, for the maintenance of the supply of which the Government, as is well known, have made special arrangements. It may be added that we imported in 1913 from Germany potatoes to the value of £422,000, cocoa to the value of £246,000, and eggs to the value of £216,000. From Austria-Hungary we also received eggs to the value of £376,000. These amounts are an insignificant fraction of our total supplies. Not to overlook our latest enemy, it may be mentioned that we paid the Turk £305,000 last year for fruit.

It may be said therefore that the stoppage of trade with enemy countries does not in itself affect our normal supplies of food (with the exception of sugar) to any

appreciable degree, as long as other purveyors for our markets continue to send their goods as before.

The public are not now justified in scoffing at 'alarmists'. Had some at least of the warnings given by sober and level-headed persons during the past ten years received more general attention, the nation might have been better prepared to meet the day of its supreme trial, and more ready to fight the great fight for existence in which it is now engaged. Where, however, so much that 'alarmists' have said has proved—at any rate as regards the designs and preparations of Germany—to be justified, it may be permissible to point out that the effect of the outbreak of the war on our food supplies has been far less than was confidently predicted by them. Some of the witnesses before the Royal Commission on Food Supplies stated that, assuming that our Navy was undefeated, the rise in the price of food here would still be enormous. The Royal Commissioners—who included the Prince of Wales, now His Majesty the King—themselves in their well-considered and circumspect Report summed up thus :

We do not, therefore, apprehend that any situation is likely to arise in which there would be risk of the actual starvation of our population into submission. But we do regard with much concern the effect of war upon prices and especially therefore on the condition of the poorer classes ; for they will be the first to feel the pinch and it is on them that the strain of increased prices would chiefly fall. We do not, however, look with any great alarm on the effect of war upon prices, so far as concerns what we have referred to as the economic rise in prices, i.e. the increase likely to be produced by the enhanced cost of transport and insurance in time of war. . . . At the same time it seems to us that it would be unwise to disregard the dangers which might accrue from what we have

described as the 'panic' rise of prices of staple articles of food, which might take place in the excitement sure to be caused by the outbreak of a great maritime war. No doubt the rapid spread of accurate information would tend to prevent any considerable duration of a rise due solely to panic, and we may assume that the greater the rise of prices the greater would be the exertions to pour in supplies. But it can hardly be doubted that much suffering would be caused if the rise in prices was sudden in its inception and more especially if it were to continue over any lengthened period of time; and we cannot disregard the possibility that it might result in danger to calmness and self-possession, just when those qualities would be of greatest importance.

The effect on overseas supplies during the first three months—when a number of hostile commerce-raiders were at large and succeeded in doing a considerable amount of injury to our shipping—may best be shown statistically. In the following table the quantities of various kinds of foodstuffs reaching these shores during the three months August–October, 1914, are shown alongside the quantities received in the corresponding months of 1913 :

	<i>Aug.–Oct.</i> 1914.	<i>Aug.–Oct.</i> 1913.	<i>Increase.</i>	<i>Decrease.</i>
	<i>cwt.</i>	<i>cwt.</i>	<i>cwt.</i>	<i>cwt.</i>
Wheat and flour .	34,665,000	31,454,000	3,209,000	—
Rice . . .	1,223,000	882,000	341,000	—
Beef . . .	1,903,000	2,626,000	—	723,000
Mutton . . .	784,000	1,115,000	—	331,000
Pigmeat . . .	1,527,000	1,630,000	—	103,000
Butter and margarine . . .	1,017,000	1,197,000	—	180,000
Cheese . . .	783,000	734,000	49,000	—
Fruit (raw) and nuts . . .	3,738,000	4,221,000	—	483,000
Tea . . .	864,000	1,206,000	—	342,000
Coffee . . .	113,000	114,000	—	1,000

The reduced imports of fruit and nuts may fairly be attributed, in some degree at least, to the great crops of fruit in this country which, in fact, resulted not only in a glut on the markets but in absolute waste; while there were special circumstances due to the war, but not directly to the action of the enemy, which accounted mainly for the substantial diminution of the meat supplies. But it is to be noted that in total bulk the imports of these primary articles of food were larger by 1,500,000 cwt. during three months of war than during the corresponding period of peace. Some petulant persons still ask—What is the Navy doing? This surely is a sufficient answer. Certainly the most optimist of pre-war prophets would not have ventured to predict that we should receive on the whole more food than usual from abroad during the first three months of warfare.

But, it will be truly said, there has nevertheless been a rise in the price of food, as of nearly all commodities. The rise has been to a comparatively slight extent directly due to the existence on the high seas of enemy cruisers and to the consequent risk of capture. After a short period of uncertainty the rate of insurance against this risk settled at about 2 per cent., which may be taken as the measure of the extent to which prices were affected by the existence of the hostile navies. Of greater effect on prices were the financial difficulties which for a time upset the delicate equilibrium of credit, and the dislocation of shipping arrangements in connexion with the transportation of troops with the consequent disturbance of the freight markets. Thus the freight on a ton of wheat from New York to Liverpool was quoted as 20s. 5d. on November 17 as compared with 8s. a year ago.

The Commission on Food Supply felt somewhat

nervous about the danger arising from a 'panic' rise of prices. There was a brief period at the outbreak of war when their anxiety seemed to be justified. Happily the nation as a whole kept its head, but among certain classes of the community there was a disgraceful rush for food. It was the worst episode of the war, and the lack of patriotism of those who took part in it might have caused serious national embarrassment had their example been widely followed. It is satisfactory to reflect that they had to pay for their selfish folly, and pleasing stories were told of shopkeepers being shamefacedly asked to take back, at reduced prices, the stores which had been purchased in a panic.

The retail prices of various commodities are affected by diverse conditions, and the rise which has occurred has differed in different localities—the difference being due not only to the ordinary causes, e.g. proximity to distributing centres, amount of active competition, rents, costs of distribution, &c., but also to some unusual causes, such as the concentration of troops and disturbance of railway facilities. The course of prices may, therefore, best be shown by the records of the wholesale markets, and I give a few figures, compiled from returns collected by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, showing the monthly averages of a few typical agricultural commodities in the form of 'index numbers', taking the month immediately prior to the outbreak of war as the base (100). Take first some figures of English live stock :

	<i>July.</i>	<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Sept.</i>	<i>Oct.</i>
Fat cattle—Shorthorns	100	104	102	101
Fat sheep—Downs	100	106	103	103
Fat bacon pigs	100	111	114	114
Veal calves	100	103	97	97
Fowls	100	97	89	89
Ducks	100	95	87	89

Compare these with prices from the dead meat markets of home-grown and imported meat :

	<i>July.</i>	<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Sept.</i>	<i>Oct.</i>
English beef	100	106	104	99
Irish beef	100	106	105	102
Argentine beef—frozen	100	142	147	144
Argentine beef—chilled	100	125	137	126
English mutton	100	105	101	99
Australian mutton	100	122	133	134
Irish bacon	100	122	121	110
Danish bacon	100	129	125	110

It is clear that, except in the case of pigs, the price of English live stock has been very little enhanced by the war, while poultry have fallen considerably in value. The independent course taken by prices of commodities which one would expect to be closely inter-related appears curious. The markets for Irish and Danish bacon are evidently sympathetic, and such difference as is shown may be regarded as due to the fact that the supply of the one had to cross the North Sea, and of the other the Irish Sea. Perhaps there is nothing which proves more conclusively the silent force of the Navy than the simple fact that our supplies of bacon and butter from Denmark have continued almost uninterruptedly from day to day since the war began. Six months ago probably every one would have accepted as an axiom that in the event of war with Germany our supplies of food across the North Sea, at any rate, would at once be seriously depleted, if not altogether stopped. Yet during more than three months our supplies from Denmark and Holland have on the whole been rather larger than usual.

The substantial rise in the price of meat from the Argentine and Australia may be attributed to a combination of causes. They have been especially subject to risk of capture, difficulties of finance and shipping have

been aggravated in their case, and in addition, there has been an exceptional demand which could not readily be met from any other source. The time has not yet come to write an account of the difficulties which arose in this trade, and of the steps taken to meet them, but it is permissible to express the hope and belief that the worst of them have been greatly reduced and will soon disappear entirely, though the effect of an unusual demand will, of course, continue.

Let us now look at the position of the staple foodstuffs from the vegetarian point of view, and for that purpose it will be sufficient to give wheat, flour, oats, oatmeal, and rice, taking in the case of wheat the prices of British and of the chief American grade, it being remembered that the ordinary loaf is made of a blend of flour in which imported wheat largely predominates :

	<i>July.</i>	<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Sept.</i>	<i>Oct.</i>
British wheat	100	109	111	109
American wheat	100	113	121	116
Flour—'Town Households' .	100	123	131	126
British oats	100	116	118	114
Scotch oatmeal	100	149	139	133
Rice—Java	100	115	120	119

I include oats as a foodstuff, as indeed they are, especially north of the Tweed, but the market for them is not in fact greatly affected by human consumption. The price of Canadian oats rose greatly (by about 50 per cent.).

One other set of figures may be added :

	<i>July.</i>	<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Sept.</i>	<i>Oct.</i>
Irish butter	100	115	108	114
Danish butter	100	110	102	114
Cheddar cheese	100	112	111	112
English eggs	100	118	122	160

These articles always rise in price during these months, and as regards butter and cheese the increase shown is

about normal. Danish butter in September, indeed, had risen considerably less than usual. The rise in the price of eggs, large as it appears, is only about 12 per cent. more than usually occurs during this period of the year.

On the whole it may be said that the rise in food prices since the outbreak of war has not exceeded about 10 or 12 per cent., and that so far the much-dreaded 'war prices' have been little, if any, more than a variation which might well occur, by failure of crops or other natural calamity, in time of peace. It is difficult to make accurate comparisons with former periods owing to the lack of continuous records for the same commodities, except in the case of wheat. Of corn prices there is a consecutive and fairly consistent record since 1771.¹ During the Napoleonic Wars the average annual price of wheat rose (in 1812) to 126s. 6d. per quarter, although it is true that in Waterloo year it was no more than 65s. 7d. After 1805 our command of the sea was undisputed, but our dependence on overseas supplies was small. Since then we cannot be said to have engaged in any war which seriously affected our food supplies, but the price of wheat rose in 1854 to 72s. 5d., and in 1855 to 74s. 8d., notwithstanding an excellent home crop in the former year, in consequence largely of interference with shipments from the Baltic during the Crimean War. These prices were not then regarded as extraordinary, and twelve years later (in 1867) the average price was 64s. 5d. It was, indeed, only in 1883 that the period of cheap wheat which the present generation takes as a matter of course began, and it may be regarded as practically certain that never again in the lifetime of any person now living will the price of wheat be so low for any considerable period.

¹ *Agricultural Statistics* 1913, Part III (Cd. 7487).

The extension of the world's wheat area has been for many years proceeding more rapidly than the growth of the world's wheat-eating population. At the present time economic prophecy is especially rash, but, apart from the immediate effects of the present war, it may be predicted with some confidence that the demand for wheat in the future is likely to keep pace with increasing supplies, and that the coming generation will probably on the whole have to pay more for its bread than the present has done.

We have seen that so far, with our fleet keeping the seas open, our food supplies have been maintained, and that such increase in price as has occurred has been due in the main to other causes than actual shortage. But the nightmare which has prevented many good people from sleeping quietly in their beds has been the dread of a naval reverse. 'No one,' they say quite truly, 'can be certain of victory. When the great battle of the North Sea is fought we believe we shall win, but if we lose shall we not, for a time, also lose the command of the sea? We shall, of course, not give in, and our Navy in due time will recover, and in the end will be strong enough to vanquish the foe, but meanwhile he will for a time obtain command of the sea and will embrace the opportunity to stop our supplies and starve us into submission.' This sounds plausible, and no doubt it is commonly believed that a temporary stoppage of our supplies would bring us instantly to disaster. Conan Doyle thinks that five or six weeks would suffice, and Kipling expresses the same idea :

For the bread that you eat and the biscuits you nibble,

The sweets that you suck and the joints that you carve,
They are brought to you daily by all us Big Steamers,

And if any one hinders our coming you'll starve !

The notion that the British Isles can be beleaguered by any conceivable naval force so that no supplies can run the blockade is fantastic. I believe it is true to say that the annals of sea warfare contain no record of the blockade of any port so absolute that no ship got through. At any rate it is inconceivable that the long coast line of the British Isles, with its countless harbours and creeks, could be guarded so that many enterprising ships, stimulated by the certainty of big gains, would not succeed in landing supplies.

Let it be assumed, however, that an absolute blockade were possible, and that the British Isles could be as closely invested as was Paris in 1870-1, and for the same period, viz. about four and a half months. Let it be assumed also that the investment took place so suddenly and simultaneously that there was no chance to rush in supplies and that even ships on passage to the United Kingdom were all prevented from reaching our ports. Under these circumstances what would be our position, for how long could we live on the supplies of food in the country?

So far as bread is concerned there is at the present time sufficient wheat and flour in the country to supply the whole population, at its normal rate of consumption, for about four and a half months. It is true that at the end of that period we should have practically exhausted all the wheat in stock, except that reserved as seed for the next crop, which would only be drawn upon at the very last extremity. But if we had to live on our stocks, in this way, we should of course at once adopt measures to economize them. One simple and obvious expedient would be to make only 'standard' bread, i. e. bread made from flour which contains about 80 per cent. of the wheat-grain instead of only 68 or 70

per cent., as is the proportion in the flour ordinarily used. This would at once add about 10 per cent. to our wheat supplies, and the bread would be, from a nutriment point of view, more rather than less valuable.

Bread, however, can be made of other cereals than wheat. We have not in this country the alternative of rye, which furnishes the staple food of many millions of Europeans, but we have in stock at any given time nearly as much barley and more than as much oats as we have wheat. Barley bannocks and oatmeal cakes are not unknown in some parts of the country now, and they would go far, if the occasion required, to provide cereal food for the people. At least they would enable the supplies of wheat to be economized, and it may fairly be said that breadstuffs in one form or another could, if necessary, be found to supply the people for a twelvemonth. The total crops of the three chief cereals—wheat, barley, and oats—grown in this country supply a larger quantity of cereal food per head than is now eaten. We have taken no account of maize, which again is the staple breadstuff of millions of people, or of rice, of both of which there is always some stock in the country. It is therefore a very conservative statement to say that for a year there would be, if supplies were properly distributed, no reason why any one should go short of daily bread, even if nothing reached our shores. Of course if barley and oats were used for bread, live stock would go short and beer and whisky would be scarce, but the problem of live stock would to a large extent be solved by killing them and a deficiency of alcoholic beverages would have to be endured. It may be noted that we are self-supporting as regards potatoes. The average crop grown in the

United Kingdom is sufficient for our normal consumption, and although we import a certain quantity, largely from the Channel and Canary Islands, to enable us to forestall our own crop of early potatoes, the quantity is comparatively insignificant, and would be foregone without any serious deprivation.

Of meat we usually import about 36 per cent. of beef, about 42 per cent. of mutton, and about 46 per cent. of pigmeat (bacon, pork, &c.) consumed each year. The stocks in hand of these imported supplies at any time are not very large and would probably not last for more than a month under ordinary conditions. But in case of emergency there is, of course, the whole stock of the country to fall back upon. At the present time about 26 per cent. of the total cattle and about 37 per cent. of the total sheep in the United Kingdom are annually slaughtered. No doubt it would be wasteful to kill half-fattened or immature stock, but it is evident that, in the hypothetical state of siege, there would be no lack of meat for a very long period and no necessity to resort to horseflesh or other still stranger sources of meat supply.

It is clear, therefore, that for any such period as we are contemplating there would be no question of starvation, as there would be ample supplies of bread and meat. Nor would milk be lacking—so long as the cows were kept alive—for in this respect we are also self-supporting. Some kinds of fruit, such as bananas and oranges, would disappear from the markets, and onions would be somewhat scarce, but generally we should have a sufficiency of fruit and green vegetables, the latter especially being almost entirely home-produced.

It is not suggested that if the British Isles were beleaguered for four or five months there would not be

much discomfort. The choice of food would be much restricted and dinner menus at the restaurants would present a very unusual aspect. Sugar and all the comestibles of which it is an ingredient would be scarce, and tea, coffee, and cocoa would become probably as expensive as champagne. All food supplies would probably be taken over by the Government and all those persons who 'live to eat' would be extremely unhappy. But I think I have shown that to speak of 'starvation' is a gross exaggeration, and that the country contains ample supplies of the necessities of life to enable the whole population to exist on a fairly liberal diet for a considerable period. It may be noted also that I have taken no account of what may be termed the 'invisible' supplies of such food-animals as rabbits, game, fish, &c., which in the aggregate would provide a substantial addition to the siege dietary.

The fact is that the nation has been too long obsessed by the wheat question. It is quite true that we produce in ordinary years only about one-fifth of our requirements of wheat. But man does not live by bread alone, nor is bread necessarily made of wheat. The supplies of possible foodstuffs produced are very large. Under ordinary circumstances, as I have shown elsewhere,¹ we produce not one-fifth but about one-half of our daily food, while in case of necessity we have resources by which our ordinary dietary can be sufficiently supplemented for many months. That a stoppage of our overseas supplies for even a brief period would cause considerable discomfort is obvious, but in time of war the people have no right to expect comfort or to complain of discomfort. Whatever inconvenience or even hardship

¹ *An Agricultural Faggot*, P. S. King & Son, 1913.

might be caused, it is not true to say that if supplies of food from abroad are interrupted we necessarily starve. Just as if a hostile army landed we should fight for a long time before we admitted defeat, so if our shores were blockaded we could live for a long time before we submitted through hunger.

One word as to those who supply our home produce. For over thirty years I have been engaged in the service of British Agriculture, and during that time, as there are many records to prove, I have been a consistent believer in the capabilities and character of the British farmer. He has been, as I think and have often said, much maligned in the past. But he has never in my experience been so much maligned as he has been, in some quarters, during this time of national stress. The fate of the Empire, the future of the race, the lives and liberties of ourselves and our children are at stake, and it has been ignobly suggested that farmers think not of the nation's needs but only of their own pockets. I refuse to credit so gross a charge. The occupation of land, no less than its ownership, is a trust. Dr. Kelly¹ said of the Irish farmers: 'If they show a selfish policy in trying to use the land for their own benefit only, and to the detriment of national or neighbourly interest, or of the wider interests of humanity, then it would be the duty of the nation to step in and deprive them of that land, and to create some new system by which the land could be used for the benefit of the nation.' Farmers, in my belief, will prove, in this crisis, not unworthy to be countrymen of those who are heroically defending British homes and hearths on the fields of Flanders. They will do their duty by working their utmost—often

¹ *The War and Ireland's Food Supply*, by the Most Rev. Dr. Kelly.

under grave difficulties—to maintain and if possible increase the produce of their farms, not because it is (as in fact it will be) profitable to do so, but because it is the desire, no less than the duty, of every Briton, each in his own sphere, to do his part to help his country in the time of her direst need.



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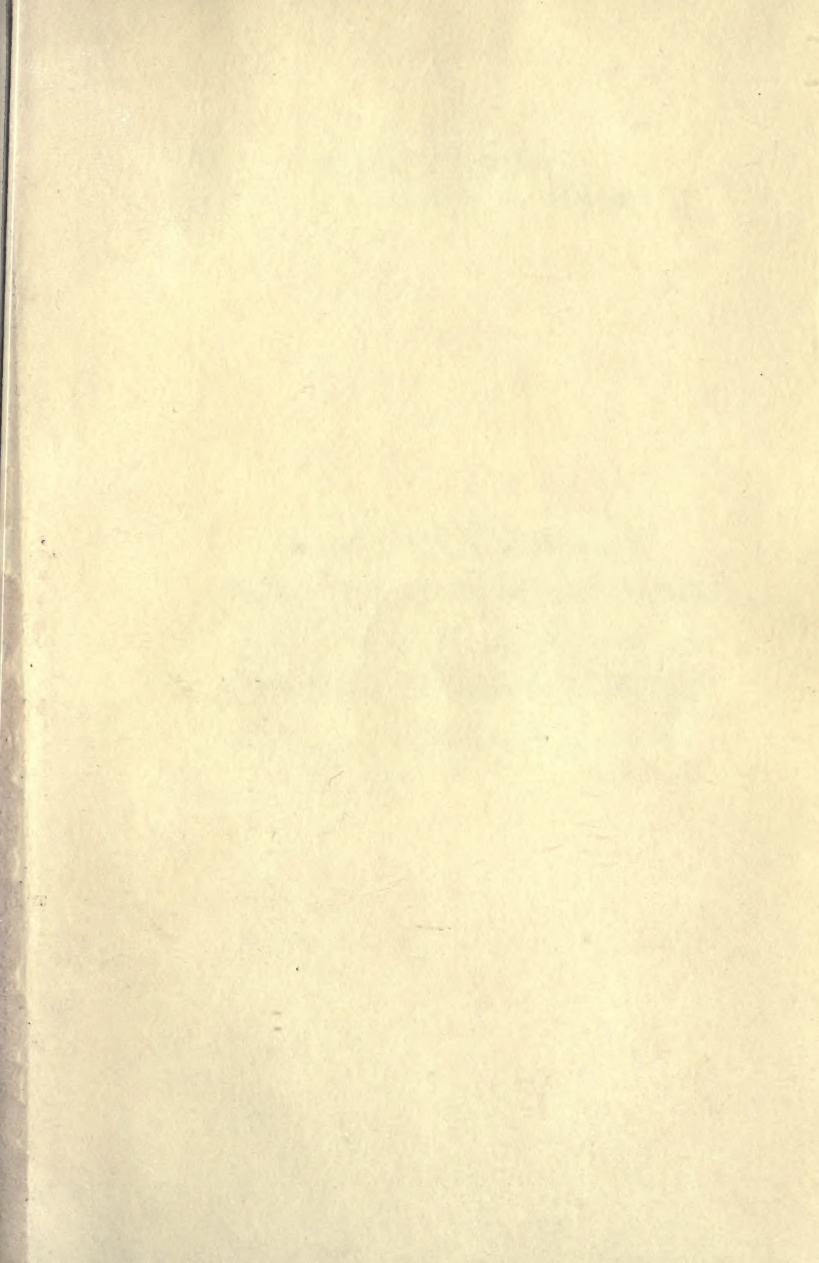
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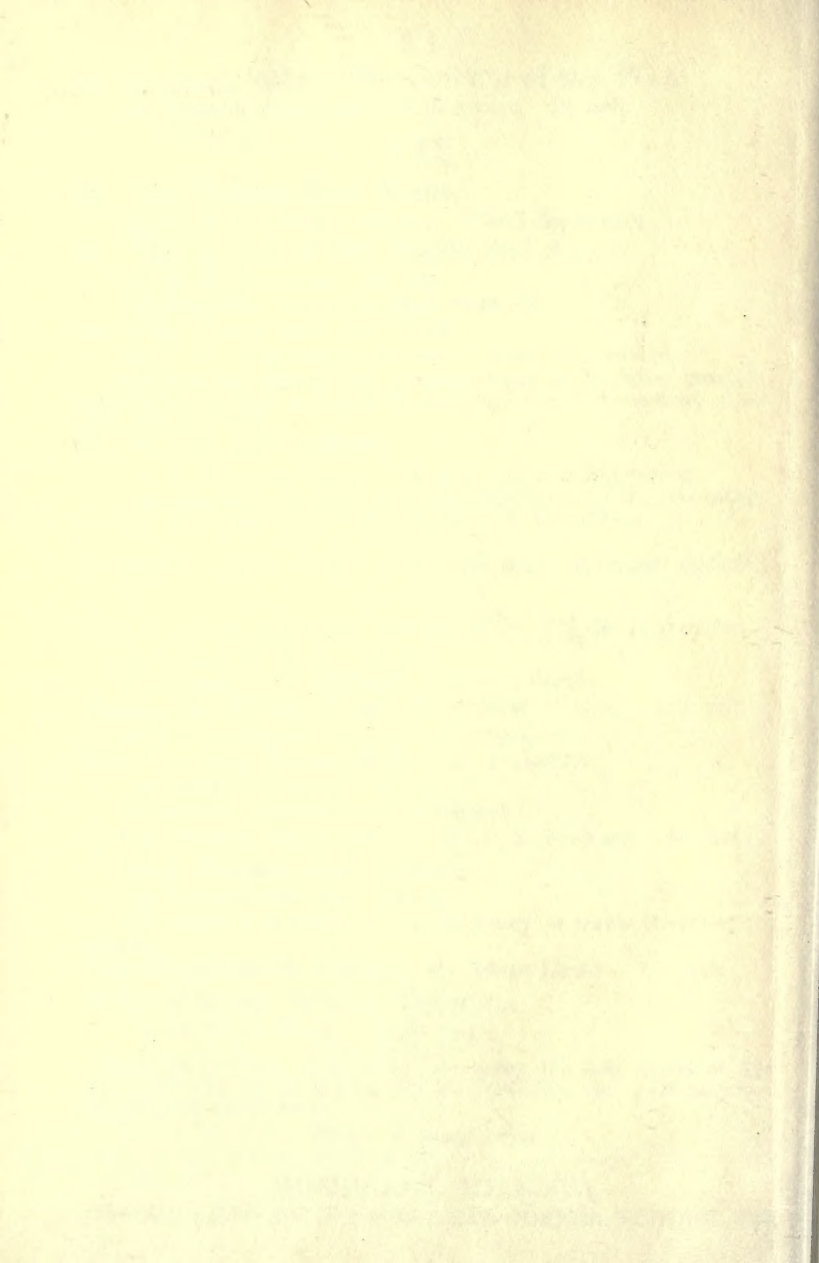
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